

BETWEEN PARTY AND PROTEST: HYBRID PARTY-MOVEMENTS,  
POPULAR MOBILIZATION, AND AUTHORITARIAN CAPTURE IN  
TURKEY

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## **Abstract**

The literature on contentious politics generally assumes that social movements at the forefront of challenging authoritarian rule are among the most committed to democratization. The explicit assumption is that social movements mobilize against authoritarian regimes simply because they are authoritarian, not because of underlying ideological convictions that may or may not favor democracy over the long-term. This dissertation suggests that this perspective suffers from a one-dimensional understanding of social movements that relies on conceptual and theoretical distinctions between state and society that are not as clear-cut as some of the empirical evidence indicates. While conventional dichotomies between state and non-state groups have been helpful in explaining how western social movements have positively impacted democratization, they have been less helpful in explaining cases where such boundaries become blurred and amorphous, sometimes producing authoritarian outcomes. Based on archival research, discourse analysis of interviews, and participant observation, I assess the implications of this paradox by examining the case of the AKP party in Turkey, which has been simultaneously conceptualized as both a social movement *and* a political party. By examining the counterintuitive expectations generated by this dynamic, I aim to show how hybrid party-movements challenge the democratizing assumptions that are a mainstay of social movement research.

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## **Acknowledgements**

This dissertation is penned with the goal of examining how internecine power struggles between Turkish social movements and the state has subsequently impacted state willingness to deploy its coercive power and extend its authoritarian controls over society, which is manifested most tangibly and consistently in the series of military coups and interventions that has distinguished Turkish political-military history. Social movements have long been assumed to embody the very spirit of democracy, mobilizing the cause of democratic justice through disruptive acts of collective protest and mass social mobilization, but the case of the AKP presents a paradox of sorts that challenges the democratizing assumptions inherent in the study of social movements.

Initially founded as a movement for social and democratic justice, the AKP was repeatedly expelled from participation as a formal political party due to its willingness to rhetorically violate the state's secularist principles. The AKPs own underpinnings as a religious social movement, moreover, made the Turkish state abidingly vigilant of its later participation in competitive party politics. The most conspicuous sign of the state's unease was in its willingness to kick the AKP out of participation in competitive party politics after running afoul of the stringent limitations placed on the discussion of religion in public life. The sheer predictability of the AKPs inevitable expulsion – and its equally predictable and inevitable return after having affirmed its unwavering commitment to secularism – has been the enduring dynamic that has defined contentious Turkish politics since the founding of the republic.

In this dissertation, I suggest that the predictable pattern of the AKPs exclusion and inclusion established by the Turkish military yielded the type of unpredictable outcome they were most eager to prevent. By proscribing the movement's political participation, and coercing its return to its social activist origins, it unwittingly facilitated and strengthened the movement's communal

solidarities that increasingly outstripped the democratic commitments they espoused. The military's prevarication over the AKPs future role was informed by its conflicting commitments to democratization while at the same time attempting to preserve the historically secular character of state institutions, which was often achieved through authoritarian means.

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### Abbreviations (in alphabetical order)

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Turkish</b>	<b>English</b>
AFU	Silahlı Kuvvetler Birliği	Armed Forces Union
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi	Justice and Development Party
AK Party		
ANAP	Anavatan Partisi	Motherland Party
CHP	Cumhuriyetçi Halk Partisi	People's Republican Party
DİSK	Türkiye Devrimçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu	Revolutionary Workers' Trade Unions Confederation of Turkey
DİSK	Türkiye Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu	Turkish Just Workers' Unions Confederation of Turkey
DİSK	Türkiye Devrimçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu	Revolutionary Workers' Trade Unions Confederation
DP	Demokrat Parti	Democrat Party
DRA	Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı	Directorate of Religious Affairs
DSP	Demokratik Sol Parti	Democratic Left Party
DYP	Doğru Yol Partisi	True Path Party
EMINSU	Emekli İnkılap Subaylar Derneği	Association of Retired Officers of the Revolution
EU	Avrupa Birliği	European Union
FP	Fazilet Partisi	Virtue Party
Hak-İş	Türkiye Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu	Turkish Just Workers' Unions Confederation of Turkey
HDP	Halkların Demokrasi Partisi	People's Democracy Party
HP	Halkçı Parti	Populist Party
HP	Halkçı Parti	Populist Party
HSYK	Hakim ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurumu	Supreme Board of Prosecutors and Judges
IMF	Uluslararası Para Fonu	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	Irak-Suriye İslam Devleti	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JITEM	Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele	Turkish Gendarmerie Intelligence
JP	Adalet Partisi	Justice Party
KMD	Komünizmle Mücadele Derneği	Society for the Struggle against Communism
MB	Mücadele Birliği	Union for Struggle
MÇP	Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi	Nationalist Endeavour Party
MÇP	Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi	Nationalist Endeavour Party

MDP	Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi	Nationalist Democracy Party
MDP	Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi	Nationalist Democracy Party
MHC	Yüksek Askeri Şura	Military High Council
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi	Nationalist Movement Party
MİSK	Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu	Turkish Nationalist Workers' Unions Confederation of Turkey
MİSK	Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu	Turkish Nationalist Workers' Unions Confederation of Turkey
MIT	Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı	National Intelligence Service
MNP	Milli Nizam Partisi	National Order Party
MSP	Milli Selamet Partisi	National Salvation Party
MTTB	Millî Türk Talebe Birliği	National Turkish Student Union
NATO	Kuzey Atlantik Antlaşması Örgütü	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDRM	Ulusal Demokratik Devrim Hareketi	National Democratic Revolution Movement
NMP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi	The Nationalist Movement Party
NOP	Milli Görüş Hareketi	National Outlook Movement
NSC	Ulusal Güvenlik Konseyi	National Security Council
NTP	Yeni Türkiye Partisi	The New Turkey Party
NUC	Ulusal Birlik Komitesi	National Unity Committee
NUG	Ulusal Birlik Hükümeti	National Unity Government
OYAK	Ordu Yardımlaşma Kurumu	Armed Forces Trust and Pension Fund
PKK	Kürdistan İşçi Partisi	The Kurdistan Workers' Party
RP	Refah Partisi	Welfare Party
RPNP	Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi	The Republican Peasants' Nation Party
SODEP	Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi	Social Democracy Party
SP	Saadet Partisi	Felicity Party
THKO	Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu	Turkish People's Liberation Army
TİP	Türkiye İşçi Partisi	Turkish Workers Party
TIS	Türk- İslam Sentezi	Turkish-Islamic Synthesis
TKP	Türkiye Komünist Partisi	Turkish Communist Party
TÜİK	Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu	Turkish Statistical Institution
Türk-İş	Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu	Turkish Trade Unions Confederation



## INTRODUCTION

The Turkish AK Party has dominated Turkish politics since being elected to power in 2002. Based on a political platform of economic populism and ‘conservative democracy,’ the party nevertheless initially shunned the label of being an Islamist political party, instead foregrounding its party program around an ideological persona that embraced the staunchly secular mores of Turkish party politics. Yet, increasingly the party has veered from its founding conviction to shepherd the Turkish state in its transition to consolidate democracy. Indeed, it was just a few short years ago that the party prioritized democratization and European Union accession as political imperatives while deemphasizing the religious principles the party was at least nominally informed by. The increasingly illiberal trajectory of the state and its rollback of many of the erstwhile democratic gains it had achieved in its first decade in power is perhaps best summed up by recent legislation the party proposed that would fundamentally change the character of Turkish democracy. Turkey’s electoral system, which like much of Europe has long been based on a proportional and parliamentary-style voting system, would be changed to a presidential system that more or less mirrors the American political system minus an independent judiciary and a relatively stronger liberal tradition that values freedom of speech and religion.

The national referendum held on April 16, 2017 ratified the constitutional amendments which legitimized the Turkish state stripping power from the parliament and vesting an even greater concentration of power within the executive branch and expanding the AK Party’s leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, personal hold on power.

Yet what is often lost in debates surrounding the contentious politics produced by the AK Party's ambition to change Turkey from a parliamentary to a presidential system is that the AK party has for much of its history not been a party at all. Initially borne out of a series of long beleaguered Islamist movements, the AK party has long functioned—in practical, legal and political terms—as a social movement. Even during the party's meteoric rise to power in 2002, scholars were somewhat peculiarly still classifying it as both a political party *and* social movement.<sup>1</sup>

While definitions of social movements can vary widely, the overwhelming majority of them are derived from the experience of democracies in the global North, where the capture of state power by a social movement necessarily disqualifies it from continuing to be considered as such, both in theoretical and empirical terms. The reason this is so is twofold. First, because social movements in democracies have generally resisted incorporation into the institutions of the state, a more or less rigid demarcation between state and non-state actors continues to characterize social movement definitions. Stated differently, the acquisition and occupation of state power is considered to be antithetical to social movements, who mostly attempt to change the behavior of the state. The second reason, following from the first, is that even in cases where the aims of a social movement explicitly beckon it to acquire state power, they are nonetheless logically precluded from further petitioning the state for their particularistic demands once they acquire institutional authority because *they are the state*, and they therefore cannot logically mobilize against themselves. A stark delineation has therefore emerged whereby state actors cannot simultaneously exist as social actors operating within the mobilizational dynamics of a social

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<sup>1</sup> Insel, Ahmet. 2003. "The AKP and Normalizing Democracy in Turkey." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102 (2-3): 293-308.

movement. Yet, while this theoretical logic had made a great deal of sense in the global North, it has not always obeyed such logic in the global South.

The literature on contentious politics generally assumes that social movements at the forefront of challenging authoritarian rule are among the most committed to democratization. The explicit assumption is that social movements mobilize against authoritarian regimes simply because they are authoritarian, not because of underlying ideological convictions that may or may not favor democracy over the long-term. Yet this perspective suffers from a one-dimensional understanding of social movements that relies on conceptual and theoretical distinctions between state and society that are not as clear-cut as some of the empirical evidence indicates. While conventional dichotomies between social movements and political parties have been helpful in explaining the democratic experience of many western countries, they have been less helpful in exploring cases where such boundaries become blurred and non-existent, sometimes producing authoritarian outcomes.

In this dissertation, I assess the implications of this discussion by examining the case of the AK Party in Turkey, which has paradoxically been conceptualized as both a social movement *and* a political party. By examining the counterintuitive expectations generated by this dynamic, I aim to show how hybrid party-movements challenge the democratizing assumptions that are a mainstay of social movement research.

Yet, what in particular accounts for the AK party's astonishing capacity to contemporaneously both elude and occupy state power? And how was the AK party able to escape the typically tenuous position of Islamist political parties in Turkey. Is there a political explanation that sufficiently explains how the AK party succeeded where all other Islamist parties had failed? Can such an account be situated within a broader comparative and analytic

framework that might redound to a better understanding of the relationship between political parties and social movements in authoritarian regimes?

The answer to how this seemingly counterintuitive dynamic can emerge is at first blush far from obvious, but I argue it is both particularistic while at the same time general. Any account that adduces this process to the vagaries of Turkish politics—either in terms that are culturally, politically, or religiously exceptional to Turkish history—is unappealing. By ascribing such an argument to the contingencies of Turkish politics, we preclude comparative analysis and undermine the potential for a wider perspective that seeks to generalize theoretical insights beyond a single case. Theory fails to be convincing if it does not attract empirical support beyond a given case, and it fails to be a theory at all if it lacks any capacity for comparative analysis.

Yet, while maximum generalizability is always a theorist's preference, placing Turkey within the canon of 'rational-choice' and 'voluntarist' arguments that reduce authoritarian durability in all its forms to elite collective action is equally unappealing. At the same time, when the breakdown of authoritarianism does occur, it is likewise attributed to the classic but now increasingly falsified formulation of 'splits among the ruling class' and the failure of political elites to maintain collective action among regime stalwarts. As Thomas Carothers pointed out, such thinking treats both democratization, and by definition, authoritarian durability as teleological processes that pivot from strategic choices made by regime elites.

Conceptualized this way, Turkey continues to be authoritarian simply because Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has maintained the loyalty of the ruling elite. Significantly, this perspective says precious little, for instance, about how President Erdoğan overcame an attempted military coup by leveraging the willingness of his movement to quickly mobilize in the streets and defeat an

attempted coup. Perhaps even more significantly, it can say even less about how Turkey changed in less than a decade from being a country that was the perennial and preeminent example of state-sponsored secularism with scientific education in its public schools throughout the world for nearly a century, to one that is now governed by a Islamist political party and religiously inspired education in public schools. In so doing, such theoretical perspectives remain strangely silent as to how the Turkish secularist state and its long-standing institutional patron, the military, succumbed to the very social force they had so assiduously attempted to guard against—Islamist movements from below.

The preliminary question this dissertation seeks to answer is thus related to the durability of institutions that safeguarded the regime for so long, specifically the military. The modern Turkish Republic, which was founded in 1923 following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, was established and lorded over by the Turkish military for much of its history. With full veto player authority as the guardian of the state's secularist identity, the Turkish military's many interventions into civilian politics became so uncannily and astonishingly predictable because its historical target was the same in 1923 as it was in 2003—the Islamist social opposition, Kurdish separatism and leftist movements.

In pursuing such a line of enquiry, this dissertation begins with the premise that the state is composed of the social forces that gave rise to it, and that the AK party's capacity to overcome the institutional and ideological obstacles presented by the Turkish military can be explained by examining how the political *and* social dynamics of contentious party politics help explain the erosion of military authority. Historically suppressed but nevertheless supported if not tolerated at worst for the sake of suppressing leftist movements, the AK party's social support and its ensuing electoral achievements did not occur and cannot be explained in a sociological vacuum.

In fact, this study suggests that the type of political transformation witnessed in Turkey is not only not *sui generis*, but that it can be conceptualized and classified as being a part of a cohort of other “guardian” regimes, or countries where state institutions are profoundly informed by an overarching ideology of the state, such as exists in Iran and Thailand, for example. Often dubbed ‘tutelary’ regimes, such countries are characterized by the presence of a highly ideological autocratic elite that attempts to safeguard the primacy of state ideology through the institutions of the state by endowing such institutions with ‘guardian’ functions. Whether they are militaries, monarchies, or clerics, such states also tend to be electorally competitive despite being classified as authoritarian and not democratic. In the case of Turkey, one of the few guardian regimes to ostensibly breakdown in the face of relentless social opposition, the literature on civil-military relations, guardian regimes, and their durability requires further theoretical and empirical elaboration. That is the purpose of this dissertation.

With respect to guardian regimes, Turkey’s experience demonstrates that these types of states have for too long been exclusively defined by their veto-player authority. More or less defined by their tendency to preserve unchallenged coercive authority to compel social and political actors, the veto-authority imputed to such regimes is ostensibly far less extractive and authoritative than the name would suggest. Given that Turkey was seen as among the strongest guardian regimes where the ideological impulses of the state radiated vertically down to society, this should provide the impetus to question their putative exceptionalism, particularly in terms of their durability. Dislodging the military from power in Turkey was not a top-down process where divisions among the ruling elite prompted a process of pact-making between regime moderates, but a bottom-up process of social and electoral mobilization that over time normalized public and elite opposition to unfettered military rule. Pact-making, in which opposing ideological and

political camps arrive at an elite-negotiated grand bargain to share power, also tended to dominate the literature on democratization and civil-military relations until the clarion call of the Turkish case collapsed that narrative.

This dissertation therefore strikes a balance between grand theories that privilege elite collective action and others that point to some level of exceptionalism and contingency that is forwarded as being dynamically causal. While acknowledging the seminal importance of institutions, this dissertation also seeks to understand how the social and cultural norms that had been established by the military over a period of nearly a century were gradually denuded by oppositional challenges from below, both through the ballot box as well as acts of political disobedience and protest. In short, I argue that changes in political norms created by contentious party politics between the military and Islamist parties, informed largely by competitive democratic politics, gradually began to erode the conditions under which the military could credibly continue to handicap the Islamist opposition. Stated another way, the changing social and cultural norms generated by democratic party competition concomitantly changed and constrained the conditions under which the military could credibly continue to unilaterally exercise its veto player authority. Thus, this dissertation is as much concerned with ideological durability in authoritarian regimes as it is with the durability of authoritarian regimes themselves.

The military's role in the making of such an oppositional force was unwittingly decisive, I argue. Initially, the fateful decision by the military to implement a synthesis of Turkish-Islamic schooling as the core of the educational system, as well as the relatively equitable treatment of religious and nationalist movements, promoted an environment where such movements proliferated, particularly at the grassroots level. Nevertheless, the military's obstinate posture vis-à-vis the Islamist opposition, the very oppositional force it had allowed to prosper, proved to

be causal. When those movements had achieved sufficient leverage and influence in the form of electoral and social opposition, the military was forced to engage in a series of soft-coups in which it forced political parties with Islamist orientations from office. Thus, while the military had encouraged competitive party politics as a core feature of Turkish democracy, it often discouraged certain parties from participating in electoral politics they deemed menacing to their interpretation of Kemalism.

By repeatedly expelling from office Islamist political parties, only to allow them to reemerge under different party monikers, the military allowed them to functionally operate as hybrid party-movements, carving a niche of relative autonomy from the state while remaining an active oppositional force within it. Such interventions turned what would otherwise be fully institutionalized political parties into an antiauthoritarian democratic rights movement, which could operate autonomously from within and outside of state institutions and party ranks.

Accordingly, this dissertation, by building on the observations above, argues that the erosion of the military as the bastion of the state's institutional and ideological power was embedded within a larger dynamic whereby the norms generated during democratic party politics promoted an inclusive politics that gradually acted as a check on the military's veto-authority. Propagating vertically upwards, the democratic norms initially championed by the military were leveraged by the Islamist opposition, spawning a system in which guardian rule was constrained by a system of checks and balances.

To trace the dynamics of this process, I explain that such process unfolded in three phases. In the first phase between 2002 and 2006, the AK Party was able to exploit the 2001 economic crisis. In Gramscian terms, this meant manipulating an organic crisis by animating already existing democratic tendencies towards the emergence of a political program inspired by



conservative, though not specifically Islamic, principles. In the second phase, which took place between 2007 and 2011, the AK party, with the help of political alliances formed with other social movements –the most famous of which being the Gülen Movement –was able to remove more than 300 high-ranking military officers from positions of influence in the military. Such a purge of the military, the greatest threat to the still precarious political position enjoyed by Erdoğan and his supporters, foregrounded state capacity to act more unilaterally in the third phase, taking place between 2011-2015. During this period, the military accepted its apolitical role with the onset of electoral democracy, ending the era of the military’s disproportional political influence in Turkey. While such demarcations of time and space might seem arbitrary, they uncannily conform to the spatial and temporal sequence of events that scholars of comparative historical analysis call critical threshold or ‘milestone’ events.

This dissertation also seeks to examine, more broadly, the role of social movements, specifically Islamic movements, in both fomenting and forestalling attempts at a more accountable and democratic polity. My conceptualization of the AK Party as a *hybrid party movement* is due precisely because of the party’s capacity to act as a democratic force, while at the same time engaging in and promoting wholly undemocratic and unaccountable state action. My conceptualization as the AK party as *hybrid party movement* is also relevant in other cases such as Iran and Egypt where other social movements such as the Green and Reform movements in Iran and Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, have variously been part of formal electoral politics only to be arbitrarily purged by ideological elements within the ruling elite. As such, movements in these countries have already demonstrated their facility to act as agents of change, preserving an institutional capacity to morph from movements mobilizing against the state to ones that are actively promoting their cause within it.

Achieving state power through electoral means while simultaneously seeing the state as a target is at the core of most *hybrid-party movements*. This characterization is clearly seen in the AK party since its first electoral victory in 2002. While the movement that constituted the party attained state power, they remained simultaneously leery of it, particularly the large corpus of state elites defined by their fealty to the military secularist ideology.

This dissertation fundamentally sees political change as constitutive of cultural change taking place at the level of society and institutions. Although AK party elites have now occupied state institutions for more than fifteen years, in both theory and practice they still remain fundamentally alienated from it as a result of their experience. By focusing on the transformative dynamics that allowed the movement to morph back and forth from party to movement and vice versa, I am able to leverage the tiny and large processes that proved to be critical junctures. Social movements in authoritarian regimes operate under different constraints and respond to different pressures than their counterparts in the United States, Europe, and much of the global North, yet the literature on social movements has yet to fully appreciate this difference.

With this in mind, Chapter One of this dissertation provides the theoretical and methodological background in which this study is based. I examine theoretical analysis that continues to be plagued and falsified by empirical events in Turkey. In so doing, I offer a theory of hybrid-party movements that roots changes occurring in society with those occurring at the level of political institutions.

In Chapter Two, I show how movement mobilization in Turkey was effective at influencing state policy, even though military and state elites actively guarded against bottom-up social pressures. Contrary to long-standing theory that privileges top-down theoretical discourses of political change, seeing elites as both agents of democracy and authors of authoritarianism, this

study likewise aims to illuminate how movements that mobilize for social and political change in authoritarian regimes are not always the most committed to democracy. Based on archival research, interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork conducted throughout Turkey, I further assess the implications of this discussion by examining how the AK Party further exploited endogenous political crises to further buttress their political position.

Over the course of two years, between December 2013 and December 2015, I conducted over twenty-one interviews with active duty and retired Turkish military officers and parliament members. Only six of those interviewees agreed to go on the record, waive their right to anonymity and grant me permission to use their names. Members of the opposition are rightly reticent to refuse to grant me an interview given the current political climate in Turkey. Therefore, due to the low number of interviewees willing to participate, I turned to collecting data from published texts and newspaper archives. I spent four months in the archives of the National Library in Ankara mining and surveying political speeches delivered by both AK party members and the military leadership. I quote directly from newspapers between 2002 to 2016, the period of the AK party's first election to power until the writing of this dissertation, where it now enjoys unrivaled political authority throughout the Turkish state.

After monitoring the appearance and frequency of certain discourses in Turkish political campaigns and speeches made by party and military elites, I identified a number of transformative discourses that proved to be critical conjunctures and thus decisive in shaping future political outcomes. Chapter Three demonstrates how the articulation of those threshold events were instrumental in weakening the military's veto-player authority. In doing so, I employ methods of sociocognitive discourse analysis (SCA), as developed by Teun van Dijk. My analysis here shows that the adoption of certain discourses by the civilian leadership played a

crucial role in galvanizing mass support, which presented society with enormous power in challenging the military's disproportionate influence on national politics. These findings suggest that the social movement framework can be extended and effectively applied to explain changes in civil-military relations as a whole rather than a rigid focus on elites alone, as rational choice theory and its proponents are habituated to do.

Chapter Four examines how forces of globalization contributed to informing how such norms that regulated standards of civil-military relations weakened the military's capacity to act unilaterally. In both theory and practice, this means adjusting and adapting the institution, in this case the Turkish military, to norms delineated by international global organizations. I further examine how the end of the Cold War, Turkey's bid at European Union membership, and the Turkish military's commitment to westernization collectively provided leverage to the AK Party leadership in organizing and deploying the purges of Kemalist military officers and their civilian allies. These purges were carried out along with a discourse of non-interference, which was circumscribed by a larger frame of democratization and the norms that produced and disseminated by liberal institutions.

## Chapter 1

### Rethinking Social Movements in Authoritarian Regimes

#### **The Puzzles, The Paradoxes and The Arguments**

In 2002, a moribund Turkish economy, caused in part by severe inflation and a rapidly devaluing Turkish lira, had slowly begun to refashion the contours of Turkish politics. The Turkish military, long the perennial *describer* of the state's ideological dogma, Kemalism, had a historical proclivity for barring Islamist political parties from participating in national elections – this was in and of itself not a novel phenomenon. The last successful military intervention was in 1997, when a “soft coup” fomented by the military had forced out a Turkish prime minister whose political platform was heavily inspired by Islam. The prognosis for the 2002 elections seemed to foreshadow much of the same: A military that was forever vigilant of preserving its institutional prerogatives to shape the country's politics.

Yet as scholars, pundits and policymakers increasingly reflect on the current transformation of Turkish politics, they universally point to 2002 as the bellwether elections for loosening, if not altogether eliminating, unchallenged military control of the Turkish state. How had this come to pass, and how did the Turkish military, a seemingly invincible force in Turkish politics, fall prey to a social movement it had long assumed an iron grip over? And how did this spectacular reversal of fortune for the military occur when all political forecasts indicated otherwise?

Scholars perplexingly pointed to the absence of a truly counterrevolutionary political force to dislodge the military from power, never recognizing that abrupt revolutionary change was as likely to spring from a bottom-up process of mass electoral mobilization as it was from a top-down process of elite settlement. Indeed, knowledgeable observers of Turkish politics expected that the military, if only by the force of historical momentum, would simply resort to

disqualifying, barring or otherwise deposing Islamist politicians from office. In short, the military would remain at the vanguard of not only determining who would be allowed to run for political office, but who would be allowed to *stay* in political office.

Yet this is not the story of post-2002 Turkish politics. Although conventional theories of civil-military control tend to point to the ways in which military elites gradually wither away at the democratic transition stage, this never occurred in Turkey. What is most stunning about the Turkish military's transformation is not that it happened at all, but the manner in which it happened. Non-controversially, I submit that the story of post-2002 Turkish politics is the story of a long repressed, though not as much as the leftist movements, political minority that was able to withstand the vicissitudes of the military's nearly century long role as guardian of the Turkish state.

Guardian regimes of the type that predominated Turkish politics are not an uncommon phenomenon. In addition to Turkey, regimes in Egypt, Thailand and Iran, to name just three countries, have also been politically conceptualized according to the presence of ideologically inspired veto players that wield ultimate decision making authority.<sup>2</sup> But whereas regimes in Iran and Thailand continue to be saddled with many of the problems that define guardian regimes,—most notably a political tendency towards authoritarianism— and Egypt already rolled into a military dictatorship, Turkey has seemingly solved this paradox not through elite pacting and negotiation but through the continued perseverance of the AK Party's primary supporters: their electoral base. Generally conceptualized as an electoral constituency in democracies and most authoritarian countries, I argue that the forces that brought the AKP to power can be better explained as a product of an ongoing process of political contestation between dueling social

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<sup>2</sup> Mohseni, Payam. "Guardian Politics in Iran: A Comparative Inquiry into the Dynamics of Regime Survival." Order No. AAI3522120 *ProQuest*. Web. 15 Jan. 2015.

forces that represent the electoral base of support undergirding the party structure of Turkish society. In short, I conceptualize the AK Party as a social movement for much of its beleaguered history.<sup>3</sup> Theories of civil-military relations often second the value of one's attachment to a social movement (especially when they are religious movements) due to the indoctrination process an officer goes through over his career. Democratization scholars approach the issue from a similar perspective and claim once equipped with norms associated with professionalism that officers will not lean towards intervening in politics or they will be able to set aside their other ideological attachments if and when summoned for counsel.

Such theoretical discrepancy, I argue, is why theorists of civil military relations and democratization were unable to forecast in advance, or explain in its aftermath, how and why the Turkish military conceded its historical guardianship role over Turkey's body politic.

Indeed, contrary to expectations and historical experience, the emergence of a truly oppositional force in Turkish politics was made possible through the ballot box. Perhaps more significantly, and somewhat more controversially, this dissertation argues that the social forces that gave rise to the AK Party, and by proxy the inexorable decline of military authority, can be best explained by conceptualizing and theorizing this process as constitutive of the social actors that gave rise to them. Just as surely as a cadre of secular minded political elites gradually gave rise to a new generation of leaders steeped in the politics of secular ideology following the founding of the Turkish Republic, this dissertation argues that a similar framework can explain a similar process for the AK Party, except in reverse.

Initially suppressed but nevertheless inevitably tolerated by the military high command, the AK Party's core support and its electoral achievements did not occur and cannot be explained in

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<sup>3</sup> To be sure, Islamist political parties were routinely banned only to emerge under a rebranded name to gain the approbation of the Turkish military.

an electoral or social vacuum. From a civil-military relations literature scope, this dissertation attempts to bring back the civil in the literature on civil-military relations. From a state-society relations literature scope, this dissertation asserts for too long, guardian regimes and states were defined by veto players that exercise almost unlimited political power. Such perspective has overlooked the role of social movements in spurring dramatic if not revolutionary political change. In Turkey, with the state's long-standing rhetorical commitment to democracy and its stated goal of EU accession, the politics of the ballot box and the social movements that cohere elections in aspiring democratic states become an even more salient frame for conceptualizing and explaining Islamist ascendance and a more ideologically moderate military.

The military's ostensibly abrupt break from its historical role brings to the fore a fundamental rethinking about our current theories of civil-military transformation and the process by which a military is forced to concede authority to a civilian government. Turkey was by most accounts the best example of a military tutelage state, or a vanguard force in politics that retained almost exclusive veto player authority to block or purge its political rivals from challenging its institutional supremacy. And yet, few if any civil-military theorists were able to foreshadow the events that forced the Turkish military to countenance a subordinate position to the civil leadership. This is not surprising. The movement responsible for jettisoning military tutelage caught not only scholars by surprise, but the military as well.

The balance of this chapter elucidates many of the theoretical shortcomings in the literature on civil military relations and democratic transition. To the extent that many of our current theories of military containment fail to properly address or articulate how the purview of the Turkish military was ultimately constrained, I argue that the tactics that social movements brought forth to deal with an unfettered military was as important to dislodging them from power



as was elite disillusionment. Although elite opposition to the military might have been rhetorically strong, in practice it was equally weak. It was not until the public articulated such opposition, in the form of consecutive crushing electoral defeats and social agitation in the form of the AK Party's erstwhile incarnation as a social movement, that the military was convinced that its historical role of unchallenged veto player was no longer tenable. Since the problem of outsized military authority is fundamentally a problem of democracy, I argue that any discussion of the struggle between civil and military actors must quite obviously pay attention to how social movements and public opposition shaped military perceptions of its guardian role. In the conclusion, I suggest bringing back the study of social forces into the literature on democratization and civil-military relations.

### **“Civil”-Military Studies**

It would not be overstating the matter to conclude that the term “civil-military relations” is a contradiction in terms. Quite paradoxically and somewhat oddly, civil-military studies almost exclusively cast the process of military subordination as one that is rarely impelled by social forces, or in many cases one that even fails to acknowledge how social movement activity compels military leaders to “return-to-the-barracks.” This is both surprising and dismaying. To restate the matter: the struggle between civil and military leaders can fundamentally be thought of as a wider struggle for democracy. Why, then, is public opposition to military rule so often rendered as secondary?

Part of the problem is the way in which we frame actors. The AK Party, for instance, now that it has achieved ultimate political power, is rarely depicted as a social movement. For good

reason. One of the defining traits of a social movement, particularly in still democratizing or semi-authoritarian countries, is their opposition to political power that stands as a very real proxy for authoritarian rule. But the AK Party, including its social base of support and the elites, which now occupy the ranks of political office in now President Erdoğan's government, were for a much longer period a repressed social movement that eventually sought to challenge the supremacy of the military and their unshakeable defense of Kemalist secularism.

It would seem almost inconceivable that any study of long-standing authoritarianism would ignore the electoral prospects of political parties that represent a genuine threat to the state's nondemocratic rulers. This is particularly the case in authoritarian regimes, where elections are held and authoritarian leaders risk the real chance of losing their grip on power through actual democratic contests. The literature on such regimes is vast, and they have variously been described as hybrid or competitive authoritarian regimes.<sup>4</sup>

Yet this is precisely what continues to reflect the bulk of scholarship on civil-military relations in Turkey: Scholars have heretofore ignored or portrayed as inconsequential the role of the very social forces who had the most to gain by overturning military tutelage rule. Conversely, the literature on civil-military relations has ignored what has historically been *the biggest threat* to military tutelage rule—the Islamist movements. It is precisely because, I contend, the AK Party was a social movement and not just a political party that they were able to evade state capture and mount a credibly threatening challenge to the military. As a movement of beleaguered social forces, the AK Party and its earlier iterations were nevertheless treated as manifestations of normal party politics by the Kemalist elite. Seen this way, the strategy of the military elite becomes clear: They believed that intermittent purges of Islamist parties would

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<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. 2013. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

indefinitely undermine their capacity to achieve a stable equilibrium for achieving power, holding on to it, and perhaps even changing the secular patina of Turkish state ideology. Yet this is exactly what happened. Not only was the AK Party able to maintain power, something an Islamist political party had never done before, but they have succeeded in implementing a series of laws inspired by Islamism, altering the education system in a certain way to accommodate and propagate Islamic way of living, and rearranging the relatively secular nature of the Turkish state.

From a theoretical standpoint, the logic of structural theories of civil-military relations do not account for the role of societal forces in contesting the power of the military. For instance, one famous example of this approach establishes a positive correlation between a certain degree of economic development and invulnerability to military coups.<sup>5</sup> Relying on this data, many of the studies that followed argued that the civilian leadership might resort to more robust strategies in order to establish civilian supremacy once a given economic threshold is passed.<sup>6</sup> Pregnant within this hypothesis is the assumption that civilian control of the military occurs when legislative reforms are implemented. However, the experiences of Latin America and more recently Turkey suggest that establishing civilian control involves more than mere legislative reform. The literature on democratization has overwhelmingly concurred with this criticism.<sup>7</sup> Nor is economic liberalization necessarily a panacea for authoritarian rule.<sup>8</sup> Egypt and Tunisia

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<sup>5</sup> Przeworski, Adam. et al. 1996. "What Makes Democracies Endure?" *Journal of Democracy* 7(1): 39-55.

<sup>6</sup> Pion-Berlin, David. 2011. "The Study of Civil-Military Relations in New Democracies," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 19 (3): 226.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Schedler, Andreas. 2002. "The Nested Game of Democratization by Elections," *International Political Science Review* 23(1): 103-122; Carothers, Thomas. 2007. "How Democracies Emerge: The Sequencing Fallacy," *Journal of Democracy* 18(1):12-27; Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2002. "Elections Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51-65. Carothers, Thomas. 2002. "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13(1):5-21.

<sup>8</sup> Tunisia is yet another example of state that liberalized economically but remained firmly authoritarian. Ironically, it was not until a broad based social movement erupted that authoritarian rule was ended. See Cavatorta, Francesco

have both undergone various periods of genuine economic reform only to see the military and other political elites become even more wary of democratic reforms. Neighboring Iran, long depicted as a guardian regime in the same vein as Turkey, has a comparatively liberal political sphere that includes a robust electoral framework for modifying or gradually reforming the authoritarian nature of the regime. Yet this has not occurred. For antidemocratic elites in authoritarian regimes—military or otherwise—legislative reform often means drastically restructuring or transferring the economic and political levers of power. As one scholar sees it, legislative reforms amount to a “nested game” in which authoritarian elites use façade elections and legislative reforms “not to lose power but to legitimate their continuity in office.”<sup>9</sup>

Authoritarian regimes employ a whole host of legislative mechanisms that similarly block or emasculate the potential for real democratic reforms. According to codified law, Turkey has a free press. Yet this has not stopped Turkey from becoming what *Freedom House* regards as the most dangerous place for journalists in the world. Indeed, Turkey has more imprisoned journalists than both Iran and China, both considered to be far more authoritarian than Turkey. Other codified laws, such as those banning language that is deemed insulting to Turkishness, or laws in Iran criminalizing the passage of legislation that threatens the Islamic character of the regime, often take precedent over piecemeal reforms that might otherwise be a mechanism for genuine reform.

Agency theories similarly devalue the role of societal forces by framing civilian control of the military as primarily a function of elite choices and strategies. In these approaches, there is a constant refrain about ‘opportunity’ and more broadly ‘opportunity structures.’ Given their control of the state and their access to its resources, authoritarian elites possess the institutional

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and Rikke Hostrup Haugbolle. 2012. “The End of Authoritarian Rule and the Mythology of Tunisia under Ben Ali,” *Mediterranean Politics* 17(2): 179-195.

<sup>9</sup> Schedler (2002), 103.

means to enact reforms. Thus, as one scholar put it: “Inert, invisible structures do not make democracies or dictatorships. People do.”<sup>10</sup> However, agency theories are mostly silent as to what actually constitutes an opportunity and when does an opportunity structure become a moment for changing the balance of power.<sup>11</sup> Agency and structural theories are not necessarily mutually exclusive and many studies combine different aspects of both approaches. Structural theories, too, make ample use of opportunity structures in attempting to explain how dominant political actors come to relinquish power. What both lack is an approach that goes beyond merely descriptive or theoretical accounts of military withdrawal. Agency theories hold water when it is empirically evident that military elites willingly decided to concede power. But they cannot explain the overwhelming body of empirical evidence that vividly demonstrates that military leaders not only often refuse to cede power, but are actively attempting to enhance it.

Trinkunas, for example, briefly discusses what constitutes an opportunity structure by referring to the degree of unity, fragmentation and disorder within the military and the civilian elite. From this perspective, “a broad opportunity structure is characterized by high fragmentation of the armed forces, a high degree of civilian popular mobilization, and an elite consensus on democratization.”<sup>12</sup> Civilian control of the military is considered complete when “elected officials transform successful strategies into institutions that permanently shift power away from the military and toward elected officials.”<sup>13</sup> Strategic action, in this context, is defined as “combining opportunity and successful civilian strategies that creates regime leverage over the

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<sup>10</sup> McFaul, Michael. 2002. “The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World.” *World Politics* 54 (2): 212-244.

<sup>11</sup> Agency theories do discuss elite pacts, consensus formation and the degree of unity and fragmentation within the civil or military elite. But they say little about how elite actors might actually capitalize on fragmentation or why some elites never leverage favorable political dynamics.

<sup>12</sup> Trinkunas, Harold A. 2005. *Crafting Civilian Control of the Military in Venezuela: A Comparative Perspective*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, Kindle Edition, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Trinkunas (2005): Kindle Edition, 7.

armed forces.”<sup>14</sup> Yet the popular and somewhat clichéd reading of a benign military either willingly conceding power or being confronted with an array of social and political forces to make possible a transition towards civilian rule does not reflect the social dynamics which upended military rule. Perhaps most significantly and damning to agency centered theories is a widely cited political science study that quantifies the lifespans of global authoritarian regimes. The study finds that military regimes are the least durable and have the shortest lifespans among all types of non-democratic regimes. Put differently, not only are military regimes the *most susceptible* to breakdown, they are also the *least durable* type of authoritarian regime.<sup>15</sup> Yet, compared to the military’s almost totalitarian grip on power in Turkey, which conservatively lasted for almost ninety years, it becomes strikingly clear that other dynamics are responsible for the military’s retreat.

Aurel Croissant et. al, similarly contend that Trinkunas’ framework falls short in two ways. First, it does not clearly theorize “the link between the civilian’s actions and the contexts in which these actions take place.”<sup>16</sup> Second, the framework does not provide a more detailed theory on how civilian control strategies are employed to change the institutional setup of civil-military relations and thereby contribute to establishing civilian control. In order to fill the gap in Trinkunas’ framework, Croissant et al propose characterizing and matching certain types of behavior (“mechanisms” as they term it) with certain strategies.<sup>17</sup> For instance, the civilian leadership systematically attempts at changing the institutional setup of civil-military relations by (1) coercing the military into complying, (2) transforming the normative framework of the

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<sup>14</sup> Serra, Narcis. 2010. *The Military Transition: Democratic Reform of the Armed Forces*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Geddes, Barabara. 1999. “What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 115-144.

<sup>16</sup> Croissant, Aurel et al. 2011. “Theorizing Civilian Control of the Military in Emerging Democracies: Agency, Structure, and Institutional Change,” *Z Vgl Polit Wiss* 5 (1): 80.

<sup>17</sup> Croissant, Aurel et al. (2011), 81-82.

military, (3) granting corporate/personal benefits to the military. The corresponding strategy to each type of behavior is as follows: (1a) sanctioning (rewarding compliance and punishing resistance), counterbalancing (fostering intra-agency rivalries), monitoring (establishing oversight institutions, surveillance mechanisms, reporting systems inside and outside of the military), (2b) ascriptive selection (promoting officers, who favor the civilian agenda for reform), political socialization (transforming the ideational characteristics of the military in the long term), (3c) appeasement (providing material and financial incentives to the military), acquiescence (providing some autonomy in exchange for political subordination of the military), appreciation (ensuring the military's loyalty by actively enhancing public support for the institution).<sup>18</sup> Robust strategies include (1a). The more the civilian leadership employs them, the more likely that they will manage to establish civilian control of the military.<sup>19</sup>

The list of mechanisms with corresponding strategies that Croissant et al. provide us with are useful analytical tools in understanding how the civilian leadership can establish control over the military. However, the approach provides us only a partial answer by focusing exclusively on the micro world of civil-military relations, which only involves the top rank elites from the military and the civilian leadership.<sup>20</sup> As such, their perspective suffers from an overreliance on elite actors to the detriment of social actors. While the authors acknowledge that the strategies they list are primarily aimed at shaping the behavior of the military, they remain silent on the civilian strategies that shape the macro world of civil military relations – the interaction between societal forces, the military, and the civilian leadership. Put more plainly, they leave unanswered the question of how social forces and movements might mobilize against military rule. But perhaps

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<sup>18</sup> Croissant et al. 2011, 85-89.

<sup>19</sup> Croissant (2011), 89.

<sup>20</sup> Pion-Berlin, David. 2011. "The Study of Civil-Military Relations in New Democracies," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 19 (3): 223.

more importantly, they fail to consider that social movements that mobilize against military tutelage rule might actually provide a robust alternative for shaping and altering the normative behavior of military elites. This is precisely the case in Turkey.<sup>21</sup>

The discussion above is indicative of the elite centered and structural orientation of the civil-military literature. Although AKP elites were undoubtedly crucial agents in transforming the previously recalcitrant behavior of the high military command, including their penchant for acting with relative impunity, this conventional reading of military subordination ignores how AKP leaders achieved a position that would allow them to mobilize against the military without pushback. In short, why did the AKP succeed where so many others had failed? Without addressing the socio-political and historical foundations of the AKP, and without acknowledging the empirical record that for much of its existence, the AKP was as much social movement as it was electoral challenger, we will be unable to offer a convincing account of how military tutelage rule began to weaken under AKP leadership.

To be sure, given the relative recency and fluidity of events in Turkey, the emergence of novel theoretical accounts of the military's non-interference is to a certain extent to be expected. Yet, this still leaves unanswered the problem of why so few studies produced on civil-military relations in Turkey—and to a lesser extent the political science literature on democratization—fail to consider the role of social movements at all. This is particularly perplexing given that disaffected AKP members, having been time and again expunged from the electoral arena by the military, have historically comprised the most likely challenge to military dominance. While this challenge to military dominance has been most visible electorally, it has been less discussed with

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<sup>21</sup> The Arab Spring has similarly demonstrated the strength of social forces in shifting the relationship between state and society, and in particular between democratic social movements and the military. This is especially the case in Egypt, where although the military continues to enjoy a privileged position, the normative environment that previously allowed the military to act with relative impunity has been permanently changed.



respect to the socio-cultural challenge to military rule. It is this terrain—the social and cultural norms undergirding the political ascendance of the AKP—that this dissertation sees as constituting the central arena by which it has effectively mounted its primary threat to the military. The generation of these shared normative beliefs, I argue, were both the locus of the party’s primary networking capacity as well as its institutional and electoral allure to the population at large.

The focus on the strategic elite interaction certainly requires close attention. However, this should not mean that the military and civilian leadership should be compartmentalized from society at large. The ranks of the military, including the top leadership, are drawn from society. Yet because the military is an inherently hierarchical system where a small group of elite officers make decisions vis-à-vis the ideological and thus electoral viability of challenger candidates, the tendency has been to ascribe such a rigid hierarchy to the pecking order between state and society. The military was no less able to remain disconnected from the role of society than was the AKP able to shield itself from military interference.

It is important to remember that the civilian leadership (primarily the executive branch) and the military constitute different institutions of the state. Although they exert institutional biases and function according to their constitutional prerogatives and principles, they cannot be detached from society writ large. Social movements, by and large, constitute the most visible form of this influence. Social movements play an active role in affecting the direction of civil-military relations for the reason that they reflect the nature of political transformation that society is going through. Establishing civilian control of the military, in this sense, should be seen as the product of societal forces’ push for a new level of functioning regarding the military’s role in politics.

The evolution of the U.S. gay rights movement in the military or the termination of conscription following the end of Vietnam War are relevant yet often overlooked examples of how cross-cutting social movements can spur change in long established military doctrine. More recently, equality movements aimed at bringing about broad-based social justice for LGBT rights have influenced U.S. military policy. Perhaps more striking is the fact that some of these movements were aimed not at influencing military policy per se, but instead they sought legal protection under the law, whether through access to healthcare or marriage equality. These social issues necessarily impacted long-standing military policy both through codified law but also through shifting cultural norms. The U.S. military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which had been authored less than two decades earlier, was shelved as a result of a determined rights movement that had surely but gradually seen a radical shift in public opinion, making it untenable for the military to maintain a separate policy for gay enlistees.

It is this cultural transformation I partially contend that the Turkish military was unable to choke off. In brief, I suggest that as an issue fundamentally concerning democratic rights, the AKP's framing of military non-interference was by necessity circumscribed by a larger frame of democracy. But this was not a historically assured process. In order to challenge military orthodoxy, a movement would require substantial mass support in order to prove electorally viable. The military's fatal error, I suggest, was its obstinate posture towards what they perceived to be political Islam. By forcing the AKP and its predecessors out of government, they turned what would otherwise be an institutionalized political party into an antiauthoritarian social movement. This allowed the AKP to carve out a niche of relative autonomy from the state, allowing them to grow and thrive despite repeated electoral bans and "soft" coups. Unwittingly, I thus suggest, the military was author of its own demise of Turkey's guardian state.

Institutionalized political parties are fully integrated into the constitutional architecture of the state—allowing guardian institutions such as the military to fully monitor their behavior—social movements by definition are resistant to and detached from government supervision. That is to say, they preserve a high degree of autonomy and remain for the most part beyond the reach of government elites. Whether the target of a given social movement is to capture the state and transform its institutions or simply to pressure political leaders, social forces have manifold effects on the way in which the military and the civilian leadership interact. The military’s increasingly authoritarian style—manifest by its repeated tendency to remove popularly elected leaders from office—further burnished the image of the AKP as not only as a political party but a democratic rights movement by the electorate and among foreigners in the global North. This image was promoted by the AKP itself and was supported by the global media outlets.<sup>22</sup>

### **State Autonomy**

In its classical form, the concept of autonomy has historically been used to describe the capacity of the state to exist independent of society. This yielded a sizeable store of statist literature that defined the capacity of the state to act without the consent of society as constituting “state autonomy.” Theorists such as Theda Skocpol initially saw social forces as more or less tied to and influenced by the transformational capacity of the state.<sup>23</sup> During its heyday, proponents of state autonomy enjoyed considerable influence in political science. More recently, however, empirical evidence has shown that autonomy—in so far as it concerns the

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<sup>22</sup> Berlinski, Claire. “Guilty Men.” *The American Interest*, 7 Dec. 2017, [www.the-american-interest.com/2017/04/24/guilty-men/](http://www.the-american-interest.com/2017/04/24/guilty-men/).

<sup>23</sup> Skocpol, Theda. 1985. “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.

ability of actors to act independently—is not the exclusive purview of the state. Social movements, because they exist to contest state power and policy, maintain considerable organizational and mobilizational capacity that remains independent of state scrutiny.

As I discuss later, the statist perspective of the relationship between state and society in Turkey is not borne out by the empirical record. The military has long enjoyed a privileged position throughout Turkish history, and it has been bestowed with an unusually high degree of autonomy not just from society, but also from the rest of the state. Its stalwart and seemingly unassailable position as defender of the regime allowed it to preserve a level of autonomy unseen among most other authoritarian regimes. Indeed, the authoritarian nature of the Turkish state for much of its history only enhanced the military's capacity to act with virtual impunity. As I argue later, this widely perceived autonomy was shattered by the very social actors that the military had allegedly controlled with an iron grip.

The structure of the state and the elites who occupy its institutions are undoubtedly important mechanisms of state control, but they cannot provide on their own a persuasive explanation of the transformation of the Turkish state. When scholars have taken to discussing state capacity in Turkey, they have generally excluded the pivotal role played by movements aimed at altering the guardian role of the military, which would presumably make the Turkish state more accountable and responsive to voters' preferences. Many of these studies have simply taken for granted and presumed that state action is always purposeful. This had led to the type of post-hoc reasoning that saw social movements and society in general as being unable to challenge the state, simply because the military continued to enjoy its guardianship role.

Taking for granted that antiauthoritarian movements had little impact on government action because the military continued to be the *de facto* veto player of Turkish politics, scholars and

pundits were awaiting an abrupt break with the historical momentum that aided the military's unique position within the state. For instance, the military's relative autonomy did not protect them, nor could it ostensibly allow them, to crackdown on the AKP and its predecessors from participating in politics. Although it could *remove* AKP leaders from political office, it could not prevent them from *running* for political office over and over again. This is an important yet often overlooked distinction. Despite its oversized role in the state, and because of its secularist underpinnings, the military was vulnerable to movements that espoused many of the same commitments to liberal democracy.

The argument that the military enjoyed unparalleled autonomy becomes even more suspect if we consider the fact that successive authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, such as Egypt and Jordan, have barred Islamist parties from participating in electoral politics altogether, including even more restrictive laws that ban them from holding meetings or cast them as terrorist organizations. Like the antidemocratic practices that banned the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and most recently in Egypt, in an atmosphere of political repression and intimidation the AKP was able to foster a sense of "bounded solidarity" that buttressed their social and political capital.<sup>24</sup> As an electorally formidable political party as well as a social movement that was embedded within Turkish state (or as some would like to call the "center") and society, the AKP nonetheless was able to foster communal and political ties that superseded the reach of the state. Because the military refused to accept, much less fully incorporate, the AKP into the political fabric of Turkish party politics, they allowed it to persevere and leverage its autonomy to challenge Kemalist power.

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<sup>24</sup> Portes, Alejandro and Julia Sensenbrenner. 1998. "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Embedded Action," in *The New Institutionalism in Sociology*, eds. Mary C. Brinton and Victor Nee. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

The continuities of the Islamist parties' capacity to repeatedly emerge from political hibernation after having been expunged from office would on its face indicate that they were helpless against military interference. Yet the recent discontinuities of Turkish politics, namely the end of military predominance, strongly suggest that the AKP was itself invulnerable to state action. Thus, whereas popular consensus has treated the military as an autonomous actor within the state—unaffected by movements aimed at toppling its guardian position—I conceptualize the AKP as a dynamic social and cultural force that was itself impermeable to state action. By building a robust informal member network, the AKP was as autonomous an actor as scholars believed the military was.

A number of factors converged to allow the AKP to dislodge the military's privileged position within the state. Although an elite centered narrative could credibly account for decades of military obstinacy, particularly since military elites simply would not relinquish their status quo position as state guardian, it is less helpful in explaining why the military eventually was forced to concede its stalwart position. Widespread scholarly consensus has thus portrayed the AKP in static terms: a mere electoral player challenging the military's long-standing veto player status. Strikingly, this tendency is reflected in the literature on military dominance, but it is curiously absent in the literature on military withdrawal. This conceptualization of the AKP—as a political but not social or cultural movement—is explicitly contradicted by the AKP's own social, political, cultural and economic approaches to building solidarity among its membership and maintaining its coalitional strength. What is sorely lacking is an integrative approach that conceptualizes the mechanisms of social and cultural solidarity that allowed the AKP to remain independent of state interference.

## Integrating Society

The contribution that cultural and sociological approaches make to the field of civil-military relations is the emphasis that society cannot remain detached from any examination of civil-military relations any more than the military could be ignored in a study of Turkish social movements. I contend that this assumption is especially germane and valid for three primary reasons. First, in as much as civilian control of the military is a project in democratic consolidation which involves a series of major institutional reforms, electoral politics becomes a central mechanism by which the political leadership is able to shape the contours of institutional transformation. This connectedness alone implies that social forces are engaged in both the making of the state and its ensuing democratic transformation.

Second, institutions are composed of material and symbolic mechanisms that facilitate collective action. This fact further situates institutional change in two ways: reforming both *the material and semiotic* components that embody the institution. Reforming the material, or very institutional fabric of a political body, takes place on the level of classical civil-military institutions. Because reform must be codified, legislating laws and new regulations abet the institutionalization of material reform. However, reforming the semiotic, or symbolic ethos of an institution, is for the most part related to modifying the cultural, ideological, and historical discourses that connect the military with society. Civilian control of the military can thus be established successfully if reform occurs in both symbolic and material terms.

For instance, although one of the central hallmarks of the Turkish military has been its commitment to democracy, it has consistently veered from this rhetorical prerogative. Given that democracy for military elites was stridently secular, its democratic commitments were seemingly

rhetorical and contingent upon a specific interpretation of democracy that was deeply grounded in a social and cultural milieu forged during the early days of the Republic. Thus, ignoring the religious and cultural underpinnings of the AKP would be tantamount to disregarding the secularist narrative that forms the basis for military ideology. It is this shortcoming that continues to reflect many studies of the Turkish military. The AKP thus serves as a valuable conceptual tool for theorizing how political parties can at once be informal social networks and (semi) institutionalized political parties. Yet it bears repeating: this is a historically contingent process and to a large extent it is shaped as much by the AKP's experience under military tutelage rule as it was by the military's experience during the end of the second world war and the beginning of the Turkish Republic. In short, while the military has often pledged its unfettered support for democracy, it was in fact pledging its allegiance to a particular and socially constructed vision of democracy. Therefore, while codified law might on the surface seem to favor the AKP and its capacity to win elections and remain free from military influence, in practice the military did little to transform its institutional ethos, or the symbolic status of the military. To some extent, then, the military's guardianship role was as much informed and abetted by its semiotic attachments as it was left unconstrained by its constitutional ones.

### **Social Movement Theory and Civil-Military Relations**

This dissertation aims to locate the study of social movements within the literature on civil-military relations. When political parties are banned from competition and their politicians are forcibly removed from office, they are left with little choice but to assume the role of social movements. Definitional problems and debates associated with the many of the most taken for



granted concepts in social science often stunt the growth of new theories. And given the sheer volume and diffusion of the social movement literature, which inhabits the pages of almost every discipline in social science, we would expect to see a great degree of definitional variation. Yet, for the most part, we do not. Perhaps the single greatest area of dispute among social movement theorists concerns not necessarily the definition of what types of groups can be considered social movements, but whether social movements seek to merely alter state power or actually obtain it.<sup>25</sup> For instance, Sidney Tarrow defines social movements as “collective challenges based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities.”<sup>26</sup> In an edited volume aimed at giving voice to understudied phenomena in social movements, Tarrow again describes the essential elements of a social movement, if perhaps with a bit more empirical clarity: “We see social movements as a particularly crystallized, sustained set of interactions between challengers and authorities around long-standing claims and identities.”<sup>27</sup> What is perhaps most striking about this definition, to borrow a word from Tarrow, is the degree to which it crystallizes the basic parameters of interaction between the AKP and the military. Yet it tells us very little about whether challengers or authorities inhabit institutions of state power: A prolonged political struggle over the defining ideological character of the Turkish state. Doug McAdam, in his seminal work *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, nevertheless argues that the notion of institutionalized power lurks behind almost all definitions of social movements: “theories of social movements *always* imply a more general model of institutionalized power.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, the implicit assumption is that most studies treat

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<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Mary Bernstein. 2008. “Culture, Power, and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Approach to Social Movements,” *Sociological Theory* 26 (1): 74-99.

<sup>26</sup> Sidney Tarrow. 1998. *Power in Movement*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> Sidney Tarrow. 2001. “Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics: Introduction,” in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, edited by Aminzade et al., New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Doug McAdam. 1982. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 36. Emphasis added.

social movements as targeting the state, whereas they are themselves apart from it. This empirical distinction corresponds to most studies of social movements.

But I argue that social movements can simultaneously achieve state power and remain detached from it so long as they are the objects of state repression. For example, state institutions are each composed of their own bureaucratic logics. While the AKP was consistently able to win elections, including the office of the prime minister, its actual capacity to wield its constitutional authority was severely undermined and limited by the military. Until very recently, it was almost virtually guaranteed the AKP would invariably be kicked out of office. This process was so consistently predictable that it made sharp distinctions between state and society impossible. In contrast to the dichotomous model of social movements, which conceptualizes contention as always occurring between groups in society and the state, I make no prior assumptions about the nature of society or the state that inhabits it. Indeed, I see the state as another actor within society, not apart from it. Drawing on European new social movement theory and the increasing relevance of culturally oriented work in American social movement studies, I see processes of domination and challenge as being irreducible to state versus society. Whereas traditional social movement theory, seen in the dominant *political process* and *political opportunities* models, has for much of its history been concerned with the process of mobilizing against the state, I ask why and how do groups mobilize? In short, I pay attention to motivation and discourse used during episodes of mobilization. This includes understudied but the increasingly relevant role of emotion, grievances, and movement perceptions about power and domination that are too often ignored in conventional social movement theory. Indebted to scholars such as Foucault and Bourdieu, social movement theorists—ranging from McAdam to Goodwin and Tarrow and

Tilly—have increasingly recognized the growing influence and analytic importance of studies that pay heed to the emotive component of social movements.

The AK Party was born from within a social movement and it sought to capture the state. But I argue that in form and practice, it continued to operate as a social movement despite the fact that it had already altered and achieved the reins of state power. This should come as no surprise, in spite of the fact that it departs considerably from traditional perspectives of social movements.

Neighboring Iran provides a useful example. The capacity of political elites in the Islamic Republic's Reform Movement, most notably president Khatami and his stunning electoral victories in 1997 and 2001, did not compel scholars of Iran from concluding that the Reform Movement had ended simply because it had achieved significant electoral success. On the contrary: If anything, Khatami's victory compelled adherents of the movement to call for increased reform, and antiregime mobilization only increased in the ensuing years. This all culminated in 2009, when presidential contender and noted reformist Mir Hossein Mousavi lost to incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in a presidential election that was widely considered to be riddled with vote rigging and electoral fraud. This spawned the Green Movement, which mobilized millions of people to contest the election results, instigating a cycle of protest and violence that continues until today. Thus, not only did the capture of state power not spell the end of a movement, it actually precipitated its growth and led to movement offshoots that continue to press the Iranian government for reform.

Nevertheless, a potentially valid critique of my approach to social movements might argue that as far as state power matters, it is the degree to which social movements become institutionalized that they can no longer be considered movements at all. My earlier comparison with Iran is perhaps illustrative of this point. While the Reform Movement was successful at

attaining state power in Iran, it was far more limited and to date has not been a transformational force for change, whereas the reverse is true in Turkey. When there was a single party regime, members of social movements were able to secure seats within the Republican People's Party (CHP in Turkish abbreviations) as their reach allowed them. When they were able to form political parties, they immediately mobilized their support base and took steps towards institutionalization. Once they become institutionalized, they employed strategies that carried them first in the parliament then to power either in the form of a coalition partner or as the government. Once they were in the government, – and even just in the parliament because they were able to block or pass legislation in support of their ideological worldview – they were at the “center.” Though, this conclusion did not mean an abrupt break from the base social movement. Thus, my inability to measure or define the degree to which institutionalized state power logically precludes a group from being considered a social movement stretches my conceptualization of a social movement so far that it almost becomes too amorphous and therefore meaningless.

But this is exactly my point. The dynamics of contestation between the AK Party and the military resembled a game of cat-and-mouse whereby the AK Party would achieve political power only to be forced out of office in short shrift. Thus, the AK Party came to perceive themselves as perpetually disadvantaged and excluded from the political process. Even when they were able to return to the political fray—often under different party monikers aimed at satisfying demands made by the military—they were still ideologically handicapped by the military: rhetorical commitments that were even tangentially related to religious discourse would bring swift retribution and admonishment from military elites. According to Doug McAdam, the expulsion of groups from the political process forces them to become social movements, which

he defines as “rational attempts by excluded groups to mobilize sufficient political leverage to advance collective interests through noninstitutionalized means.”<sup>29</sup> It was therefore in the AKP’s interest, as well as their only available political prospect, to amass the necessary social capital that would invariably force the military to respond the demands of society.

Nevertheless, to provide some analytic clarity to my argument, I would no longer consider a group a social movement when it has supplanted the political coalitions it sought to challenge. In my case, once the AKP successfully displaced the military’s veto player authority with its own, it could no longer be credibly considered a social movement. Empirically, this can be seen in the AKP’s stunning capacity to wield its authority with the type of impunity its historical target—the military—once did. Whether through its ability at changing codified law that targets the military’s long-standing secularist ideology, or through attempts at changing the Turkish constitution, the AKP in form and function is no longer a movement.<sup>30</sup> The AKP’s success in institutionalizing the ideology of its movement—whether through court packing or administrative appointments in the various political bodies of the state—precludes it from being considered a movement by any reasonable measure. Simultaneously, the AKP’s membership ceases to be as much. Instead, they resemble the core electoral constituency of any other party structure in the Turkish electoral system.

By comparison, the reason we can classify the Green Movement or the Reform Movement in Iran as movements at all is exactly because they have failed to fully institutionalize their power, and they continue to remain revolutionary forces for ideological and political change within the Iranian state. The same logic undoubtedly applies to the Muslim Brotherhood. As I have argued,

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<sup>29</sup> McAdam (1982), 20.

<sup>30</sup> Not the least of which was the AKP’s ability to remain in office despite a number of new codified laws that directly take aim at the state’s commitment to secularism. Many of these laws are religiously inspired, such as new municipal codes banning drinking past a specified time or the repeal of a ban on wearing headscarves in governments offices.

it was the very precariousness of AKP rule in the past that was conducive to its alternating position as both social movement and state actor. This involuntary political oscillation allowed the AKP to increase its social capital while at the same time allowing it to leverage its outsider status to petition the state for inclusion in the political process. It was, by even the most conservative definition, a social movement *par excellence*. At the same time, with its *raison d'être* now extinguished, so too is its status as a movement.

As other studies of social movements have shown, western bias continues to plague our understanding of social movements outside the west, where the boundary between state and society can be opaque. This leads to definitions of social movements that do not accord with the empirical record outside of western countries.<sup>31</sup> Such state-centered bias, which draws a rigid line between state and society, is challenged I argue not only by Turkey, but other cases such as Iran and most recently the Arab Spring, where state elites often melted away to join antiregime protests. Indeed, in an effort aimed at expanding our definition of social movements, one scholar coined the term “awkward social movements.”<sup>32</sup> In most all definitions of social movements, groups make claims against the state. Thus, the state is by definition a part of social movement claim-making. Yet, scholars have recently shown that other entities, such as corporations, are increasingly becoming the target of social movements.<sup>33</sup> This is particularly the case in the United States and Europe, and it demonstrates that states are not always the target of social movements.

As such, this dissertation is partially about how the AKP paradoxically distorted this long-standing and somewhat artificial definition of social movements. To be sure, social movements

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<sup>31</sup> Diane E. Davis. 1999. “The Power of Distance: Re-Theorizing Social Movements in Latin America,” *Theory and Society* 28 (4): 585-638.

<sup>32</sup> Francesca Polletta. 2006. “Awkward Movements—An Introduction,” *Mobilization* 11(4):475-478.

<sup>33</sup> Armstrong, Elizabeth A., and Mary Bernstein. 2008. “Culture, Power, and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Politics Approach to Social Movements.” *Sociological Theory* 26 (1):74-99.

can seek to either change the state or eventually become a part of it. But they are rarely conceptualized as aiming to achieve state power while simultaneously seeing the state as a target. This characterization corresponds to my treatment of the AKP: While they attained state power, they were simultaneously leery of it. Also, *this is not* a dissertation about how the AKP gradually replaced the military as a hegemonic or authoritarian force in Turkish politics. This point has been increasingly argued, especially in lieu of president Erdoğan's heavy-handed constitutional and extra-constitutional actions aimed at ostensibly solidifying the AKP's control of the state. What *is* at issue here is why the AKP, far from controlling all the organs of state power, were often more concerned with how to shield themselves from it. While in practice the AKP and its predecessors inhabited the state, they still remained fundamentally alienated from it. This constant cycle of on and off domination, I argue, necessarily forced the AKP to cultivate political strategies that situated them as both social and cultural agents separate from the state while at the same time aiming to inhabit it in order to fundamentally change it.

How does a social movement realize the difficult task of altering the mechanics of state machinery without having the coercive force to do it? And what happens if it is the coercive power of state, the military itself that needs to be surgically removed from inside that state machinery? Institutional approaches provide us with legislative recipes on how to achieve this goal. Agency approaches underline the importance of strategic moves that give leverage vis-à-vis the military. Almost all approaches in the literature on civil-military relations underline the importance of consent from society, conferred by electoral support to the political leadership. However, with the exception of Schiff's Concordance Theory, which emphasizes agreement among the political leadership, the military and the citizenry regarding some aspects deemed essential (as previously discussed in chapter one), the literature is mostly silent with regard to

how this interaction occurs. By and large civil-military studies do not offer tools for dealing with the dynamics of the interaction between society and the military, especially during momentous period of political upheaval, such as the process of establishing civilian control of the military. But social movements theory does. Aided by a voluminous rich literature that pays particular attention to the role of social forces and the dynamics of contention between state and society, it offers a potentially transformative empirical, theoretical and conceptual approach to the study of how movements can alter the fundamental logic of regimes.

Mass mobilization in favor of military reform is a key factor in gaining leverage vis-à-vis the military during the process of establishing civilian control. Therefore, in order to understand these social and cultural dynamics, we should look beyond the classical civil-military actors – the civilian leadership and the military – and include society in the analysis by examining the role of social movements in achieving this goal.

There are numerous approaches to social mobilization such as resource mobilization theory, which focuses on how movement actors deploy available resources in order to collectively mobilize. The literature on political opportunity structures (POS), often referred to as the *political process model*, attributes importance to specific events or to the emergence of specific actors inside and outside the movement, labeling these developments as “political opportunities.”<sup>34</sup> The logic is straightforward: political opportunities enable mobilization. But it is a decidedly contingent view of social movements: Social movements are necessarily reliant on external opportunities to increase their mobilizational capacity. In the absence of such opportunities, movements lack the fundamental organizational goods to present a credible and collective threat to the state.

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<sup>34</sup> Eligur, Banu. 2010. *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, Kindle Location 256.



More recent is the theory of hegemony, which pays greater attention to how group linkages can buttress and fortify calls for collective action. Whereas the state is a hegemonic force deploying its capacity to stymie movement mobilization, social movements similarly employ the wide array of civil society networks to organize disparate groups to contest the hegemonic ideological currents underpinning the state.<sup>35</sup> While not garnering near the scholarly acclaim enjoyed by POS, discourses of hegemony have more recently found scholarly currency within the culturalist tradition. This discursive turn over meaning and identity formation is particularly salient to the Turkish case. Scholarship produced on the construction of collective identity in the Turkish context has yielded novel insights into how dominant cultural norms are challenged through the reproduction of mobilizational identity.<sup>36</sup> Outside the ideological binaries that often miscast Turkish society as reducible to a clash between modernity and tradition or secularism and Islamism, the production of meaning and identity is perhaps best exemplified by the Gezi Park protests during Summer 2013. Initially precipitated by discontent over the planned demolition of a public park, protesters quickly mobilized the creation of a new collective identity based on what they perceived to be the creeping authoritarianism of then prime minister Erdoğan's administration. This allowed protesters to mobilize far more adherents than would have been possible had the meaning and motivation of the protests been just an environmental rights issue. This also had an immediate and dramatic impact upon government policy given its ultimate decision to shelve the destruction of the Gezi Park.

Yet the political process model in particular exerted a gravitational pull within social movements studies because it offered a convicting account as to why some movements gained the critical momentum needed to facilitate social mobilization and why others did not. However,

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<sup>35</sup> Tugal (2009), 326.

<sup>36</sup> Tas, Hakki and Meral Ugur. 2007. "Roads Drawn to Modernity: Religion and Secularism in Contemporary Turkey." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40 (2): 311-314.

*process* also drew substantial criticism because of its structural bias and its ambiguity as to what could be justified as a “political opportunity.”<sup>37</sup> Others criticized political process since it seemingly ignored how meaning, identity and emotion played a motivating force among movement participants. These criticisms have now reached a critical threshold in social movement studies. Leading social movement theorists, including those responsible for the ascendance and theoretical formulation of the process model, have now shifted their attention to what one scholar called the “missing link between structure and agency.” As evidenced by this statement, the process model was simultaneously imbued with an excessively positivist or structural bent, including a “problematic empirical record.”<sup>38</sup> While the former was a cause for concern, it was the sheer lack of empirical evidence that compelled many long-standing *process* supporters to question its continued utility as the benchmark explanatory theory of social movements.<sup>39</sup> With its decline, *process* oriented scholarship—and social movement analysis more broadly—entered a poststructural era.<sup>40</sup> Yet this revolutionary intellectual shift within sociology has yet to dramatically influence the political science subfield of civil military studies.

### **Theorizing The AKP as a Hybrid Party Movement**

The overall coherence of my approach is defined by my conceptualization of the AKP as a hybrid party-social movement. To my knowledge, scholarship produced on the AKP’s political success has yet to move in this direction. This is somewhat startling. Religiously inspired

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<sup>37</sup> Goldstone, Jack. 2004. “More social Movements or Fewer? Beyond Political Opportunity Structures to Relational Fields,” *Theory and Society* 33 (3/4): 333-365.

<sup>38</sup> Koopmans, Ruud. 2005. “The Missing Link Between Structure and Agency: Outline of an Evolutionary Approach to Social Movements,” *Mobilization* 10(1): 19.

<sup>39</sup> Jasper, James M. and Jeff Goodwin. 1999. “Trouble in Paradigms,” *Sociological Forum* 14(1):107-125.

<sup>40</sup> Goodwin, Jeff, James M. Jasper, and Jaswinder Khattri. 1999 “Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory,” *Sociological Forum* 14(1): 27-54.

political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (and elsewhere in the Middle East) have long been cast as social movements in both theory and practice, but the AKP has not. What's more, the Muslim Brotherhood had achieved a level of political and electoral success that the AKP could only have dreamt of just a few short years ago, and its rank-and-file membership far exceeds the AKP's. None of this precluded its categorization as a social movement. The inclusion of Islamic movements in the social movement literature clearly enriched perspectives in relation to collective antistate mobilization. The classic benchmark definition for a social movement has historically revolved around collective claims made by a group against the state. In this sense, the AKP is no different.

With regard to the emergence of distinct Islamist movements, modernization theorists suggested the main impetus for Islamic mobilization stems from the psychological anguish created by the failure of regional governments addressing the deleterious effects of structural crises caused by exogenous factors such as wars, modernization, industrialization, and globalism.<sup>41</sup> Resource mobilization theory, for instance, drew attention to the limitations of the grievance-based explanations and instead focused on the networks and social resources of Islamic movements. These studies revealed the capacity of social networks in enhancing social movement strength. These networks generally included a wide variety of professionals, allowing the movement to benefit from the vocational and technocratic diversity of its followers. With a focus on mobilization structures, resource mobilization proponents demonstrated that Islamic movements did not occur in a vacuum but rather grew out of existing networks.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Waltz, Susan. 1986. "Islamic Appeal in Tunisia," *Middle East Journal* 40 (4): 651-70. Dekmejian, R. Hrair. 1995. *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*. 2d ed. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press. Faksh, Mahmud A. 1997. *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*. Westport, CT: Praeger. Hoffman, Valerie J. 1995. "Muslim Fundamentalists: Psychosocial Profiles." Pp. 199–230 in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>42</sup> Wictorowicz, Quintan. 2003. *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 14.

How these movements become visibly active as political challengers is a theoretically and empirically significant question. In the chapters that follow, I subject my analytic and theoretical claim—that the establishment of civilian control of the military is a product of society’s push rather than the isolated efforts of civilian leadership—to the empirical record. I see social movements as representing the most explicit form of this influence. Thus, social movement capacity to mount a political challenge to the state, in this case the Turkish military, remains central to the puzzle of its seemingly unanticipated collapse as state hegemon.

To a large extent, I argue, social movement theory fills the empirical gap by discerning the link between social movements and political parties.<sup>43</sup> These linkages work equally in tandem and flow both ways: movements can spawn political parties and well-established parties often produce robust movements. In the latter case, state and electoral linkages work to enhance and facilitate political mobilization.<sup>44</sup>

While sociology has quite expectedly led the way in collapsing the structural dogmatism of social movement analysis, scholars from political science—such as Joel Migdal—have been equally successful in deconstructing the statist orthodoxy in comparative politics. Migdal argues that global divergence in state capacity is largely a product of the state’s linkages with society. Seeing the state as a series of institutions that exist within, not apart, from society, Migdal coined various terms in an attempt to articulate a perspective that critiqued the state as an autonomous actor independent from society. Among them was his now classic use of the phrase “state-in-society,” which underlined the interconnectedness of the state and society. Contrary to *center-periphery models* and state-centric approaches, Migdal argues that state and society are engaged

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<sup>43</sup> Maguire, Diarmuid. 1995. “Opposition Movements and Opposition Parties: Equal Partners or Dependent Relations in the Struggle for Power and Reform,” in *The Politics of Social Protest*, edited by Jenkins and Klandermans, London, UK: UCL Press, 199-228.

<sup>44</sup> Eligur (2010), Kindle Location 400.

in a cycle of mutually transformative interaction. The state sometimes states play a pivotal role in the formation or transformation of social movements and social forces, while the inverse also holds true. Thus, a state in this picture is “constructed, reconstructed, invented and reinvented, through its interaction as a whole and of its parts with other groups in society.”<sup>45</sup>

The state-in-society model is part of a developing frame within social science that attempts to move beyond the nation state as the fundamental unit of analysis. Subsequent scholarship has attempted to build upon and refine Migdal’s formulation with specific reference to social movements. Jack Goldstone, for instance, suggests adding an extra dimension to the state-in-society approach that explicitly addresses the role of social movements. While Migdal drew inspiration and articulated his “anthropology of the state,” Goldstone offers a sociological frame of state-and-society that pays particular attention not just to social actors as a generic grouping, but as a specific social enterprise challenging the state and its institutions. According to Goldstone, if the state is in constant interaction with different social actors, then the role of movements in transmitting their preferences to state elites warrants consideration. Goldstone proposes looking at social movements as a portfolio of efforts by politically active leaders and groups to influence politics. Social movements therefore should not be seen as merely *peripheral actors* or simply as a grouping of oppressed forces challenging the state from outside; instead, they should be seen as a part of the social dynamism in which state institutions, movements, media and the public at large shape and influence the contours of this interaction.<sup>46</sup>

Much like Migdal, James Scott offers a nuanced picture of the limits of the state’s transformative power. Authoritarian states that attempt to unilaterally transform society into a

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<sup>45</sup> Migdal, Joel S. 2001. *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 23.

<sup>46</sup> Goldstone, Jack. 2004. “More Social Movements or Fewer? Beyond Political Opportunity Structures to Relational Fields,” *Theory and Society* 33 (3/4): 333-365.

vision of what David Harvey terms “high modernism” are often blinded by what they cannot anticipate.<sup>47</sup> For Scott, the state is prone to what he calls “tunnel vision.”<sup>48</sup> This is because the sheer scope of attempting to transform society forces states to hone in on the functional aspects of transformative projects. Thus, when Prime Minister Erdoğan’s government released plans to bulldoze a public park in Istanbul, they failed to anticipate the strong reaction it would produce. Nor could the Turkish government have predicted how mobilization against the park’s destruction would quickly morph into a litmus test for the state’s authoritarian policies. According to Scott, the state is concerned with what is of “immediate [practical] interest.”<sup>49</sup> Perhaps a more useful example that pays heed to my argument is the Turkish military’s predictable pattern of banning religious parties from political participation or forcibly removing them from office in “soft coups.” The military’s immediate concern was to rid the state of a political party that was anathema to Kemalist military ideology. Yet the unintended consequences of this policy only increased the rank-and-file membership of the AKP, allowing them to mobilize even in greater numbers and forcing the military to reckon with such a numerically formidable movement. At the same time, continual state banishment necessarily cultivated AKP autonomy, producing a movement that had the advantage of both electoral access to the state and social independence from it.

At a more basic level, modern social movement theory critiques the rigid hierarchical structuralism that sees all action as taking place at the institutional level. I see this assessment as helpful in analyzing civil-military relations as well. I thus pose the following question: How do social movements pattern the relationship between state and society, making a transformation of

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<sup>47</sup> Harvey, David. 2000. *The Conditions of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origin of Social Change*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

<sup>48</sup> Scott, James. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

<sup>49</sup> Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (1998), 11-13.

civilian control of the military possible? One way of answering this question is by turning towards related frames that elaborate the state and society discourse to include issues of power relationships and ideological conflicts of interest. Since my theoretical argument is driven by the tremendous empirical divergence witnessed in the competing discursive foundations of the military and the AKP, I extend the state in society approach to contextualize the distinct patterns of interaction between the military and social movements. Specifically, I examine Islamist movement capacity to counteract the ideological foundations of the military by articulating a counter-hegemonic discourse: Physical mobilization against the Kemalist underpinnings of state is only made possible through its discursive articulation. Unlike classical civil-military studies that posit a hierarchical structure to the dynamics of state-society interaction, I attempt to move beyond such a state-centered calculus. I see these interactions as inherently contingent and mostly unpredictable, and are not mere issues of whether the state represses or relents or if movements mobilize or demobilize. Rather, social groups challenge state policy with their own strategies and repertoires of contention that often yield unanticipated consequences and can alter the very institutional fabric of the state. Thus, I see resistance against domination as being both political *and* cultural, whereas civil-military scholarship only examines the former. Thus, I not only ask how or why did Islamist movements mobilize against the state, but how did they survive at all given the state's capacity and willingness to marginalize them? What were the unintended long-term consequences of the military's term strategy towards "political Islam," and why did strategies aimed at marginalizing political Islam paradoxically marginalized the military?

## Theory of Hegemonic Politics and Civil-Military Relations

Enabling civilian control of the military, I contend, involves more than just a structural transformation of the state. That is to say, I conceptualize this process as both a sociopolitical project as well as a cultural one. Theories of “hegemony” provide a more complete account of this process by aggregating the prevailing economic, political and ideological frames. This perspective allows scholars to not only glean the mobilizational strategies of movements or the political calculations of the state, but it attempts to decipher the motivations and meanings behind such strategies; in a word, I examine “instrumentality” as much as I examine institutions.

Theories of hegemony are particularly beneficial to area studies scholars because they reveal the nuanced and intricate complexity of this process, demonstrating the connection between power, institutions, and ideology with reference to social movements and their capacity to influence everyday life and the public’s relationship with the state.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, “hegemony” is a set of discursive practices that pattern relations between state and society. It is at its most effective when it involves the absence of violence or coercion. Thus, if the definition of hegemony is the conferral of consent to the ruling elite class in the absence of state coercion and violence,<sup>51</sup> then understanding how these processes are enacted and counteracted is central to our investigation. The normative basis for establishing civilian stewardship of the state encompasses the execution of an alternative vision of politics. In the case of Turkey, the success of a counter-ideological frame was wholly dependent on the ability of Islamists to articulate a counter-narrative that superseded the imperatives of having a secular state but not a democratic one. To

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<sup>50</sup> Tugal (2009), Kindle Location 364 – 417.

<sup>51</sup> Žižek, Slavoj. 1994. *Mapping Ideology*. London, UK: Verso, 238.



state the question differently: Was abrogating *de facto* military rule more important than loosening the state's secularist commitments?

### **Political Society's Role: Changing Civil Society's Perception of the Military in Politics**

Rather than inventing a new concept to capture the link between the civilian leadership, military and society I follow Cihan Tuğal's interpretation of Gramsci's "political society." Tuğal locates the nexus between state and society as "the sphere where society organizes to shape state policies but also to define the nature of the state and political unity."<sup>52</sup> He defines political society as "the set of organizations (mainly political parties and other sociopolitical movement organizations) that form, control, and regulate (1) local and extra-local leadership and authority figures, (2) imagined political bodies, belongings, and collectives."<sup>53</sup> Tuğal's depiction of political society is critical since it clearly delineates how and when society interfaces with the state: Political society shapes the imagination and exercise of politics through the conferral of authority through hierarchical structures.<sup>54</sup> Its multifarious link to society in general and to social movements more specifically constitutes the macro-world of civil-military relations. Political society shapes, defines, and articulates the military both as an imagined political body and a concrete representation of the state's ideology. Even under regimes governed by military tutelage, reforms that would lead to civilian control of the military cannot take place without the articulation of why these reforms are necessary.

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<sup>52</sup> Cihan Tugal. 2009. *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*. Kindle Edition, Location: 316.

<sup>53</sup> Tugal (2009), Kindle Location 322.

<sup>54</sup> Tugal (2009), Kindle Location 328.

In short, civil society promulgates its commitment to political reform. But absent a political society that is able to gather the requisite elite support to pass legislative reforms, civil society groups act as the primary fulcrum by which the public articulates its desire to enact reform. Civil society consists of “formal organizations (schools, dormitories, associations) and informal networks (neighborhood networks, religious communities, friendship networks, hometown networks) that regulate everyday life, the use of space, and people’s relation to the economy.”<sup>55</sup> Civil society and political society interface most visibly through civilian leadership and authority figures. Tuğal does not specifically mention interest groups and knowledge creating organizations (such as universities and think-tanks) in his definition of civil society. But I find these associations as quintessential examples of ideal type civil society organizations, particularly in still-democratizing states.<sup>56</sup> Since they play an essential role in helping political society articulate both the desire and capacity for reform, these types of groups represent what I would call the “attitudinal mechanism” connecting political and civil society: Civil society acts as the conduit through which otherwise atomized social groups can coherently specify the public’s opposition or allegiance to dominant discourses.

When discussing the “articulation capacity” of political society, the focus is on two aspects: (1) whether political society has the intellectual capacity to articulate a discourse to which civil society will confer general consent and (2) whether political society possesses the material (mass media outlets, funds) and social (informal networks, devoted activists, charismatic leaders) resources to funnel this discourse downward effectively and mobilize members of civil society.

As Huntington explains, the link between civil society groups and the elite class is critical because “the standing of the officer corps and its leaders with public opinion and the attitudes of

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<sup>55</sup> Tuğal (2009), Kindle Location: 364, 417.

<sup>56</sup> Needless to say, this applies equally to both democratic and semi-democratic countries.

broad section or categoric groups in society toward the military are key elements in determining military influence.”<sup>57</sup> A political leadership that enjoys the power of articulation to weaken the military’s influence, will also preserve the ability to increase its leverage over the military during the processes of reform. I define the “articulated power” of political society as the capacity to publicly monopolize and disseminate given attitudinal preferences and ideological discourses. If society’s perceptions of the military with regard to its role in politics remain intact, then the prospects for reforming that role (as in establishing civilian control of the military) declines significantly. Huntington is essentially arguing that public opinion of the military can lay the groundwork for either suppressing potential challenges to its continued dominance or providing the fulcrum for its end. To this end, I thus contend that the military’s articulated capacity was significantly weakened by a movement that was able to monopolize and mobilize a counter discourse that disrupted the ideological registers of secularism and Kemalism. For those working in the culturalist tradition, hegemonic discourses are challenged through the “collective contest over interpretation.” The AKP, for example, did not merely interpret and frame military hegemony as an equal rights issue or one that broadly disadvantaged religiously inspired political groups. Instead, their framing process purposely avoided discourses of religion and secularism while emphasizing the inherent antidemocratic structures that military rule had enabled and perpetuated. Nor was this a typical process that can be easily ascribed to the conventional frame of cause and effect. Meaning-making for social movements is by definition an instrumental mechanism in and of itself. The AKP, I argue, was not necessarily responding to the actions of the military or attempting to illicit a certain response. They were, however, attempting to make a

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<sup>57</sup> Huntington, Samuel. 1994. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 89.

collective claim over the very meaning of their movement and its own aspirations to frame military and the history that it made as being tantamount to undemocratic rule.

### **The Effect of Globalization and International Organizations**

The manner in which political society develops from within a social movement and the way it interacts with civil society has enormous implications for a political project with the sheer immensity of ending military dominance. Focusing on structural dynamics might appear as the main site of contestation between oppositional forces. To be sure, this is precisely the scholarly perspective that has tended to define civil-military studies. However, exogenous factors, both institutional as well as ideological, exert a considerable influence alongside domestic sources of change.<sup>58</sup> In this respect, the first question to consider is why a civilian-controlled military should be necessary for a liberal democracy? James Burk traces the answer to this question to early western liberal philosophers, and he posits that liberal thought in part “arose as a reaction against the practice of aristocratic monarchies in Europe to join civil and military power in the same person.”<sup>59</sup> It was believed that the aristocratic class was mainly concerned with extending their land and military holdings, goals that are fundamentally contradictory for the so-called “commoners,” who were mainly interested in peace, stability, and maintaining their daily lives. The solution, according to these philosophers, was to compartmentalize military and civil power while making the military accountable to civilian leadership.

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<sup>58</sup> Kurzman, Charles. 2008. “Introduction: Meaning-Making in Social Movements,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 81 (1): 6.

<sup>59</sup> Burk, James. 1998. “The Logic of Crisis and Civil-Military Relations Theory: A Comment on Desch, Feaver, and Dauber,” *Armed Forces & Society* 24 (3): 455.

From a philosophical standpoint, in order to protect civil liberties and minimize the potential abuse of power by the aristocratic class, it only made sense to place the military within the black box of civil leadership. However, the separation of power did not guarantee the subordination of the military. Such lofty rhetorical pronouncements, even when codified constitutionally, remained fundamentally at odds with actual practice. For example, at least in modern era, this problem became particularly acute following the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal.<sup>60</sup> During a period when the cold war still defined the ideological parameters of global politics, states were torn between the dueling commitments of capitalism and communism. The Portuguese military's unexpected military coup, which was organized and carried out by Marxist officers, produced significant apprehension among NATO member countries. This anxiety resulted in the creation of divisions in international organizations when a number of them began to initiate programs that would introduce a behavioral mechanism that would in theory require the military's perpetual obedience to civilian leadership. This was best exemplified in the civilian supremacy principle in NATO, which ultimately became a normative requirement for member states. This policy began to be actively promoted during the spread of "third wave" democracies, which Portugal had serendipitously precipitated. International organizations such as USAID, NATO, and the EU played an increasingly pivotal role in disseminating the civilian supremacy principle as the global norm in civil-military relations.

The end of cold war and the rapid diffusion of market globalism had sweeping effects in the political and economic structure of states, but especially their militaries. Instituting civilian control became a part of the simultaneous double transition toward democracy and markets. It was suggested that market reforms (deregulation, privatization, and the ending of protective

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<sup>60</sup> Bruneau, Thomas and Harold Trinkunas. 2008. "International Democracy Promotion and Its Impact on Civil-Military Relations," in *Global Politics of Defense Reform*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 53.

tariffs) would invariably serve democratic objectives. This would presumably occur by breaking the links between leading economic groups, whose profits heavily depended on their connections with the political elite under statist policies.<sup>61</sup> Whether or not these claims reflect empirical patterns that governed the early growth of the market economy is debatable. For example, the connection between super PACs and political office in the United States, which is perhaps the paradigmatic example of a free-market economy, suggests otherwise with respect to the relationship between economic groups and political elites in free market economies. However, the point to be made is that the marriage of democracy to the market economy (and later market globalism) had a dramatic effect on the way that military organizations restructured themselves in the second half of twentieth century. Charles Moskos identifies this transformation as the creation of post-modern militaries:

“Changing national security perceptions [with the end of cold war], increasing use of technological warfare equipment [technological advancement as the result of specialization of work-force], the acknowledgement of marketplace factors in terms of work force recruitment in the armed forces [end of conscription], and the rise of identity politics [primacy of individual choice/individualism]” paved the way to the creation of Post-Modern militaries.<sup>62</sup>

The transformation of the modern military—or what might better be described as a predemocratic military—to a post-modern one necessitated certain reforms be carried out. However, this process required planning and the implementation of rather larger scale projects in countries where the military historically played an influential economic role. The economic influence of the modern military became so large in some countries that it spawned a series of phrases used to depict the immensity of their impact. This ranged from the general (praetorianism) to the specific (the military-industrial complex in the United States). Politically,

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<sup>61</sup> Domingues, Jorge I. 1998. “Free Politics and Free Markets in Latin America,” *Journal of Democracy* 9 (4): 73 [70-83].

<sup>62</sup> Moskos, Charles. 2000. “Toward a Postmodern Military: The U.S. as a Paradigm,” in *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 16.

a transition to democracy was often the most immediate panacea for ending political violence and the brutal oppression often meted out by military regimes. Economically, a transition to a free-market economy where the military's influence became circumscribed by the civilian state was similarly necessary. International organizations conveyed much of the same message by offering programs, incentives or corrective measures to pave the way for achieving these standards, which in and of itself was the envisioning of a new political unity where the military's role was fundamentally redefined.

The prospect of European Union membership is a prime example of how international organizations were influential in changing the standards of a country's civil-military relations. In the case of Turkey's potential accession into the EU, it becomes tangibly and empirically evident that the role of the union was decisive in initiating military reform. This invariably impacted the Turkish military's willingness to forsake the "soft-coup" policies of its predecessors. But two intertwining factors need to be emphasized: domestic politics and the eagerness of the military's elite brass to move past candidacy and towards full membership. If EU acceptance entails a certain level of legislative shuffling, which would significantly reduce the military institutional prerogatives, then the Turkish state becomes *par excellence* one of the leading examples of how praetorianism is constrained by external actors and organizations. As I will argue in greater detail in the following chapters, the AK Party palpably benefitted from the Turkish state's ongoing EU candidacy talks. But whereas the literature on international organizations reflects the advantages enjoyed by movements when they work in tandem with non-domestic organizations, I contend that such dynamics were mostly serendipitous but nonetheless favorable to ending military rule. In short, there was no direct or substantive link between the EU and the AK Party, but there were

philosophical linkages and objectives that opened up political space for oppositional political forces.

The willingness and steadfast commitment of civilian and military elites to ensure Turkey eventually accedes to the union produced an unmistakably favorable political climate that affected the direction and pace of political reforms. If entry in the EU, or even existing NATO membership, means promoting systematic changes in the way in which the civilian and military leaders interact in national policy making, then such prerequisites set the stage for the initiation of civilian control of the military. Thus, while I further contend that international influences were indispensable, they were in and of themselves insufficient to drive broad-based reforms. The second factor, internal politics dynamics, refers to the ability of the civilian leadership that are tasked with managing reforms. The effect of international organizations on asserting civilian supremacy is of importance only if the civilian political leadership succeeds in utilizing such pressures for change to their advantage. To put it differently, and to repeat my earlier caution, external factors buttressed society's preexisting inclination to reduce the state's praetorianism, they did not produce it. The case of Turkey offers a striking example of this process at work.

### **Effective Political Influence**

Effective political influence refers to a continuous, almost cyclical process of granting and receiving support for the political leadership's reformist agenda. General support for the political leadership should not be confused with legitimacy.<sup>63</sup> Whereas the latter refers to the broad approval of a political system divorced from the moral approval of incumbents or challengers, the former is related to the support given to the elected civilian leadership "to make far-reaching

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<sup>63</sup> Parsons, Talcott. 1967. *Sociological Theory and Modern Society*. New York: Free Press, 355-382.



decisions responsibly in the sense that the elements of the population that are affected will accept the consequences.”<sup>64</sup>

Political influence is created mainly by political society and articulated by political elites. But this dynamic is not separate from the related process through which civil society grants it legitimacy and authority. The effectiveness of political influence depends on the ability of elites to deploy, implement, or alter in a manner that is consistent with reform. Civil society does not have the formal procedural power or legislative access to directly implement political reforms. Political society, on the other hand, maintains the lion’s share of legislative and institutional power. The capacity of civil society to exert a considerable influence on elites, and thus the extent of reform, is to a large degree a function of the relative balance of resources.<sup>65</sup> I contend that mere access to political power does not automatically produce a favorable dynamic for political elites. At the same time, a lack of institutional power cannot be simply equated with a lack of political power. As I contend in the following chapters, the absence of political power on the part of the AKP did little to weaken them as a movement. Contrary to expectation, I argue that it was the very lack of institutionalized political power that allowed them to present a broad-based challenge to the Kemalist elite.

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<sup>64</sup> Parsons, Talcott. 1959. “Voting and the Equilibrium of the American Political System.” In Eugene Burdick and Arthur J. Brodbeck, eds., *American Voting Behavior*, p. 84. New York: Free Press.

<sup>65</sup> Diarmuid Maguire suggests that political parties should work within the state and civil society to maintain or increase their influence in the political system. Interactions between political parties and social movements are the most visible form of this process. Both might have something to gain from this interaction, which is why their objectives often coincide. What is under examination here is whether these actors have much to offer each other in relation to their relative balance of resources, which might be divided into four areas: organizational, cultural, constituency, and policy resources. The key question is this: “Does the movement or the party have access to elements within civil society that the other would be unable to reach on its own?” Diarmuid Maguire, “Opposition Movements and Opposition Parties: Equal Partners or Dependent Relations in the Struggle for Power and Reform?” in Jenkins and Klandermans, *The Politics of Social Protest*. 1995. London: UCL Press Limited, 204.

Informational capacity, or the knowledge creating and knowledge processing capacity<sup>66</sup> of political society, is paramount in creating lasting political influence. Sometimes referred to as epistemic or knowledge communities, political society derives its informational capacity from the state but also from sources that are indirectly connected to them (i.e., civil society or international organizations). In some cases, knowledge is demanded and in other cases it is deployed and made available for everyone, regardless of demand. A key issue is whether this supply and demand leads to military reform. The role of political society here is to persuade civil society by conveying these norms in a top-down process that optimize their political influence.

One way of transmitting norms and rendering them desirable and necessary for the common good is presenting and articulating them in a specific discourse that will appeal to wider segments of society. I elaborate on this process in Turkey by demonstrating that epistemic influence ran counter to what we might expect: The historically hegemonic discourse of secularism promoted by the military was countervailed, appropriated and repackaged by the AKP as being utterly undemocratic and anachronistic. Such grand effort was aided by the liberal elites, who regarded the AKP as a democratic force by turning a blind eye to the niche of relative autonomy that the movement crafted since the military coup in 1980.

### **The Role of Discourse**

Through the medium of leadership, political society links civil society and the state.<sup>67</sup> The interaction between the military—as representing the state’s coercive arm, and the civilian leadership, as members of political society—reflects the macro-dynamics of this relationship.

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<sup>66</sup> Lehman, Edward W. 1977. *Political Society: A Macrosociology of Politics*. Colombia University Press: New York, 140.

<sup>67</sup> Tugal (2009): Kindle Location 326.

This interaction is as transformative as it is representative because it involves the imagination and exercise of a localized political unity<sup>68</sup> and the integration of this unity into a wider social imaginary, which is the western moral order with respect to the role of military in society.<sup>69</sup>

Political society, through the medium of civilian leadership, articulates the present order (the current state of civil-military relations) and the new order that it aims to establish by employing a specific discourse. The discourse employed during this process is socially constructed in light of a specific discursive ideology, which aspires to sustain and reproduce the status of the military. Such transformation naturally brings about important issues of power and control.<sup>70</sup> The military is also highly involved in this process both as an object and subject of various discursive events that encourage the achievement of the ‘desired’ end product: A civilian controlled military.<sup>71</sup>

*Critical Discourse Analysis* in this respect is a useful heuristic for examining how this process unfolds. A focus on texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts, or other communicative events surfaces the often overlooked episodes of interaction that take place during the process of mitigating military rule. But it also reveals how the deconstruction and reconstruction of norms, signs, cultural and material aspects of civil-military interaction occur. Critical discourse analysis serves as an empirical tool in revealing actors’ perceptions and why they choose specific courses of action while at the same time shedding theoretical light on the seemingly theoretically intractable “agency-structure problem”<sup>72</sup> that continues to plague the pages of civil-military studies.

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<sup>68</sup> Tugal (2009): Kindle Location 326

<sup>69</sup> Taylor, Charles. 2004. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

<sup>70</sup> Meyer, Michael and Ruth Wodak. 2012. *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis: Introducing Qualitative Methods Series*. SAGE Publications: Kindle Edition, 241.

<sup>71</sup> A civilian controlled military does not necessarily mean democratic control. However, a military that abides by civilian leadership is the insufficient prerequisite for a democratically controlled military.

<sup>72</sup> Croissant, Aurel et al. (2011), 90.

As such, I will show through discourse analysis, interviews, and written documents how the process of establishing civilian control unfolded in Turkey. Critical discourse pays particular attention to both the underlying symbols and signs of power but, more importantly, it reveals the concrete and tangible manifestations of it. I argue that in Turkey the AKP leveraged the dominant discourses disseminated by the military to inculcate a shared sense of social and political solidarity in collective opposition to the state's hegemonic ideology. Finally, I conceptualize the AKP as an "embedded" social network and analyze the political, cultural, and economic mechanisms that bind their self-perception as perpetual outsiders. This allowed them to generate and likewise disseminate their own dominant discourse to challenge the military tutelage state. I situate my examination within the larger theoretical and analytic fields of social movements and civil-military studies.

## Chapter 2

### From Within and Outside of the State

#### **Contentious Historicizing Social Movement Mobilization and The Military in Turkey**

Unlike normal social movements that see the state as a target or seek some policy change in order to obtain greater benefits or inclusion within the system, the various erstwhile iterations of the AKP have historically sought to fundamentally change the ideological and institutional legacies of state power—to wit secularism and Kemalism—by capturing the state itself. Combined with the military's exclusionary practices of expelling the AK party from office or placing outright prohibitions on its participation in national politics, it has in both theory and practice conformed to the definition of both a political party and social movement, or what I call *hybrid party-movement*. These simultaneous yet conflicting commitments and practices—to struggle to seize the reigns of key state institutions while being more or less a victim of its predatory behavior—is not unique to Turkey. Andreas Schedler has described a similar process in authoritarian regimes in which the pursuit of electoral reform and the right to participate in normal politics is nested within a broader two-level game of electoral competition.<sup>73</sup> This is particularly the case in so-called hybrid regimes, where competitive elections regularly take place but are manipulated to such a degree that they serve to reinforce rather than reform authoritarian rule.

The AKP, however, has historically been able to overcome many of the prohibitions and problems faced by oppositional movements and candidates because they capably reconstituted

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<sup>73</sup> Schedler, Andreas. 2006. *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

themselves by retreating to the comparative safety of a well-established movement that enjoyed broad public backing. As discussed in the preceding chapter, one of the central propositions of this dissertation is that the military's strategy of proscribing the AKP's participation in politics paradoxically had the countervailing effect of wantonly consummating the movement's autonomy from the state. Moreover, such a broad, open-ended approach came to be viewed as running contrary to the military's stated commitment towards greater democratization, and far more importantly, it failed to leverage the state's capacity to properly and permanently institutionalize the AKP by bringing it within the orbit of state institutions where its behavior would be constrained and co-opted by the normative logic of the state. As a result, such a ham-fisted approach unleashed an even greater sense of resentment and allowed the movement to operate with considerable bureaucratic and organizational autonomy both when it was able to contest elections but especially when it was not.

The objective of this chapter is to provide socio-historical context to AKP's social and political autonomy from the state. The political and historical setting in which the party was able to escape absorption into the legal-bureaucratic machinery of the state remains a critical causal factor in its later capacity to shield itself from military interference once it had fully extended its organizational tentacles throughout the Turkish bureaucracy.

Turkish civil-military relations have been explored from many the theoretical discourses detailed in chapter one. Institutional approaches, for example, examine the organizational momentum behind the Turkish military's political autonomy from an historical perspective.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Cizre, Umit. 1997. "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Autonomy," *Comparative Politics* 29 (2): 151-166. Karabelias, Gerassimos. 1999. "The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Post-War Turkey, 1980-95," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (4): 130-151, Narli, Nilufer. 2011. "Concordance and Discordance in Turkish Civil- Military Relations, 1980-2002," *Turkish Studies* (12)2: 215-225, Satana, Nil. 2008. "Transformation of the Turkish Military and the Path to Democracy," *Armed Forces and Society* 34 (3): 357-388. Some of these studies trace the origins of the military's political influence to as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Janissary (Yeniceri) infantry coups under the direct command of the Sultan began to play a more influential role in the political affairs of the Empire by

The structural positioning of the military, as Ümit Cizre has explained, was strengthened and expanded by constitutional measures following repeated interventions in 1960, 1971, and 1980 by the Turkish Armed Forces.<sup>75</sup>

Institutional explanations of the Turkish military's willingness to tolerate such an exclusionary policy also tends to correspond to the theoretical insights of the modernization school. As in many late developing and postcolonial countries, the military has often viewed itself as the primary institutional vehicle by which democratization but especially modernization could be achieved. Scholars working within the modernization paradigm therefore were more inclined to draw a link between the degree of bureaucratic professionalism in the military and the existence of underdeveloped civilian institutions. Huntington famously described this phenomenon using the term 'praetorianism,' which he defined as an instance in which the military emerges as the only viable ruler because of the absence of legitimate civilian control and underdeveloped political institutions.<sup>76</sup> From the perspective of civil-military studies, the ultimate purpose of the modernization school was to explain under what conditions civilian control of the military prevailed and why militaries of late developing nations failed to meet that level of professionalism.<sup>77</sup>

Following such logic, the politicized organizational structure of the Turkish military was attributed to the institution's internalized mission of modernizing the country by mimicking the

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organizing rebellions in an effort to precipitate or manipulate sultans' decision-making process. A similar approach historicizes military hegemony as beginning from the Young Turk Movement between 1868 and 1908, when the Janissary corps was dismantled and replaced by a European style Army named Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye [the Victorious Troops of Muhammad]. Although, there is disagreement as to when the military influence in politics became highly visible, there is a scholarly consensus within this approach that the military gradually steered out of the executive power's control, reinforcing its institutional autonomy starting from as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>75</sup> Cizre (1997), 152.

<sup>76</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 221.

<sup>77</sup> Koonings, Kees and Dirk Kruijt. 2002. "Military Politics and the Mission." Pp. 16 in *Political Armies: The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt, NY: Zed Books.

bureaucratic professionalism seen in the west.<sup>78</sup> Because of the all-encompassing ideological program underpinning the military's modernization objectives, rank-and-file officers—and not simply Turkish military elites—developed a profound identification with the historical foundations of the bureaucratic-legal mechanisms of state modernization. In tandem with civilian bureaucrats, the military established Kemalism as *the* state ideology, which was embodied in a series of general congresses of the People's Republican Party (CHP) between 1927-1935. It was during the nascent period of state-building that the military became an active participant in crafting a modern Turkish bureaucracy guided by western and secular themes rather than Islamic ones.

Economically, the bureaucratic elite of the state believed that Turkey should rely on a mixed economy in which the state established and managed industrial and agricultural complexes. During this period, private industry was virtually non-existent, and since the state was heavily involved in the political economy of the private sector, the influence bureaucrats wielded radiated to almost all aspects of everyday economic as well as political life.

Cizre contends such a 'separate but one' amalgam of the state's civil-military bureaucracy produced a different type of political economy than that of other late developing countries that are often used as comparative historical examples, such as in Thailand and Indonesia. The Turkish military, for example, was stridently opposed to exercising direct control of the state even when it did intervene in civilian politics because it also believed in the principle of civilian supremacy. Such ideological dissonance, as this dissertation has argued, was a major causal dynamic that helped cultivate AKP autonomy. The military's strategy of both expelling the party only to allow it to return to competitive party politics reflected its commitment to democratization, on the one hand, but a kind of democratization that resisted even the faintest

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<sup>78</sup> Cizre (1997), 154.



shadow of an Islamic-style politics, at the very least until the 1980 military coup took place successfully.

The initial institutional profile of the Turkish state called for the separation of the military from participating directly in politics in order to preclude the military's potential growth as a political rival to Atatürk, and the Turkish Armed Forces successfully internalized the policy in both theory but especially practice.<sup>79</sup> However, military elites nevertheless allowed a certain degree of latitude for civilians to interact with officers while at the same time reserving its unilateral institutional prerogative to define the scope and limits of such interaction.

The AKPs position in Turkish party politics, and its ensuing capacity to overturn the sociopolitical order established by military tutelage, points to the failure of voluntarist and institutional approaches to accurately portray, or in the case of the rational-choice approach, to accurately anticipate how such a wide-ranging transformation unfolded. Given that both incentive based and institutionalist approaches herald just the opposite result: the continued primacy of the military as a guardian of the secular legacy of the bureaucracy and electoral process, such conventional wisdom has been unable to grapple with the ensuing legacy of the AKP and its centralization of political power in spite of the cohesion of the military elites and the historical institutional momentum of Kemalism.

This chapter therefore offers a somewhat different perspective that foregrounds the centrality of bottom-up processes and specific social forces that had both the most to lose and gain in the contentious politics produced by open-ended military intervention.

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<sup>79</sup> Cizre (1997), 153-156.

## **Social Movements in The Modern Republic and the “Center – Periphery Analysis”**

During the period near the end of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic, the type of contentious politics that would come to shape the next century of struggle over the ideological rules and norms that would be a mainstay of electoral contestation among various social movements began to take shape in earnest. Each of these sociopolitical movements, more specifically Islamists, Kemalists, leftists, nationalists, and the Kurdish movement had differing experiences and interpretations as to how Ottoman rule had impacted their capacity to achieve self-determination and expression in the political order. More importantly, each political movement had equally distinct definitions as to what constituted social progress, the role of state in achieving that goal, and the direction of domestic and foreign policy.

In the 1950s such ideological divergence manifested itself in the form of pro and anti-Democratic Party (DP) government policies, which lead to the 1960 military coup. In the 1960s and 1970s, social movements, inspired by leftist, right-wing, nationalist, and Islamist ideologies, found wider ground for political expression and achieved greater latitude to move freely within state institutions and to politically mobilize on the street. Such ideological diversity found its greatest expression in the contentious politics of the 1960s and especially 1970s, which produced yet another full-fledged military coup in 1980.

The mobilization of movements continued after the 1980 coup and ideological clashes regenerated, foregrounded the relationship between social forces and the state. While the Kurdish national movement, for example, pressed for greater autonomy and civil rights, Turkish nationalist movements, inspired by the mobilizational capacity of both leftist and rightist

ideologues, chose to suppress Kurdish claims violently. And while Turkish nationalists actively sought a socio-economic alliance with the Turkic nations of central Asia, Islamists continued to see nationalism as a divisive force that only fragmented the Islamic bond shared by these communities. At the same time, the People's Republican Party (CHP) began to actively implement policies that aimed to secularize the everyday lives of people. Islamists and conservatives responded by mobilizing resources to contest the secularization of public life. Alliances often produced strange ideological bedfellows, as Turkish nationalists, for example, diverged from their secularist counterparts when it came to their pursuit of potential European Union membership as the ultimate solution to the country's economic and political woes.

Normative theories of civil-military relations have typically suggested that the involvement of the Armed Forces in national political debates is detrimental to the evolution of democracy. However, given the military's strong historical positioning as the only institution that managed to survive the transition from the empire to nation-state, it constituted the institutional backbone of the new republic's bureaucratic and legal administration, and such involvement could only be expected given the historical and political circumstances in the nascent Turkish state.<sup>80</sup>

To some extent, there was a palpable sense of continuity knowing that the republic's bureaucratic structure had a concrete ideological and institutional core to pivot from. This observation led Serif Mardin to formulate a center-periphery analysis of the type of contentious politics that had been cultivated as a result of the military's interactions with these movements. Through his analysis of the late Ottoman and early Republic politics, Mardin argued that bureaucratic remnants of Ottoman state institutions also laid down the *Weltanschauung* and *raison d'être* of the new Republic's bureaucratic structure, which contained at its core an

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<sup>80</sup> Gocek, Fatma. 2011. *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era*. London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 22.

unequivocal belief that the “center” must be protected from the periphery at all costs.<sup>81</sup> The center, according to Mardin, stood for the core of the Ottoman State, the Sultan and the central bureaucratic apparatus, whereas the periphery included the “residual social arena – the institutions and the geographical area that lived apart from the center and were only in loose integration with it.”<sup>82</sup> In this model, the center—or the state—uses methods more or less resembling a strategy of reward and punishment to repress the periphery. From this perspective, a succinct history of the modern Republic can be advanced in which the periphery (any social movement) makes efforts to take control of the center (effectively the military state), with the center resisting at all costs.

Considering the structural features of the Ottoman state<sup>83</sup> and the bloody history of insurgency in the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the Turkish Republic, center-periphery analysis is strikingly pertinent in examining and making sense of Turkish politics, in spite of the putative simplicity of its logical construction. On the other hand, this perspective tends to gloss over critical and salient aspects of political interaction between competing groups for political influence. To a large extent, this is so mostly because it reduces society to a Manichean struggle between state and society where the principal actors are the rulers and the ruled. Such stark delimiting of the boundaries between state and society, moreover, is reminiscent of Migdal’s canny admonition to not anthropomorphize the state as an autonomous actor.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Serif Mardin. 1978. “Youth and Violence in Turkey,” Pp., 205-225 in Mardin, Serif. 2006. *Religion, Society, and Modernity in Turkey*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 218.

<sup>83</sup> The Ottoman Sultans, when they were finally able to consolidate their reign on the wide territory they ruled upon, made specific arrangements in the governing system to prevent the emergence of a hereditary nobility or an aristocratic class as the terms are used in the European historical experience. The *devşirme* and the *sipahi* systems were established specifically to circumvent first the emergency then second the possible rise and hence the rivalry against the concentrated authority of the Sultans.

<sup>84</sup> Migdal, Joel S. 2001. *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 50.

From a purely empirical and historical standpoint, moreover, the bipolarity of the center-periphery formulation is insufficient considering the multiplicity of social movements in existence during and after this period, the accompanying complexity and factionalism involved among and between competing social forces and the state, and the causal power of ideology. The power of ideology in Turkey, particularly Kemalist secularism, has acted as a catalytic force throughout Turkish society, fomenting the mobilization of counter-movements, the production of contentious class politics, and the establishment of institutions in support of state-sponsored secularism. There is abundant empirical evidence that indicates mass movements from below that are ostensibly excluded from the center carry with them the potential to influence “the center” if not capture it altogether during revolutionary upheavals.<sup>85</sup>

The point to be made regarding center-periphery arguments, particularly given the frequency with which Turkish and so-called “Islamic” societies are described in the binaries of tradition and modernity or secularism and theism, is that the center is no more impermeable than society. As Gramsci sagely argued<sup>86</sup>, coincidentally during the incipient period of secular state-building in Turkey, a normative component of establishing the legitimacy and authority of the state requires consent from society, which makes them willing and compliant agents in their own oppression, particularly those “excluded” groups.<sup>87</sup> Society is therefore not composed of two centers, as the generalized Manichean dichotomy would suggest, but of multiple centers operating in tandem among and between movements as well as the state. While the state bureaucracy can mediate such interactions, they can be as easily conducted on terms decided by

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<sup>85</sup> Cohen, Ronen A. 2014. *Upheavals in the Middle East: The Theory and The Practice of the Revolution*. New York: Lexington Books, 175-197.

<sup>86</sup> Though he was certainly far from the first. I mention Gramsci here because of the overall applicability of his work to the contours of contentious politics in Turkey.

<sup>87</sup> Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London, UK: Lawrence and Wishart, 107, 175-185

oppositional forces from below, such as mobilizational and revolutionary insurgencies. Mass movements for greater social equality constitute one of the most tangible societal modes of these power formulations, and they operate both from within and outside the constraints imposed by the center, or the state.

From an empirical standpoint, the history of military coups in Turkey from the perspective of center-periphery analysis fails to account for vital points that underpin and emphasize the amorphous and overlapping distinction that the theory otherwise neglects. First, civil and military bureaucrats that encompass the “center” and control the state have not always been the key cultivators of major social and political change in Turkey. Since the initiation of Turkish multi-party politics began in earnest in 1947, a “residual social arena,”<sup>88</sup> or the “periphery,” carved out a unique political space in the country’s body politics, where it could pass legislation that helped to mitigate social and moral laws regulating everyday lives of citizens, which contradicted the vision that the Kemalist military and civil bureaucrats had strived to establish. If the periphery was excluded from the center and delimited by its power, how could it then be so singularly instrumental in passing such legislations?

Second, historical evidence suggests, even under autocracy during the single-party rule of the CHP, parts of the so-called periphery had already existed in the formal power structure of the center. In most countries, elite actors occupying the institutions of the state often find themselves at odds with the very policies they are tasked with enforcing, and elite ambition can sometimes be used as much to weaken state power and policy as it is thought to empower it. In this respect, Turkey is no different, where members of the elite ruling class, such as leaders of social movements that previously occupied important positions within leading political parties and other state institutions, later came to oppose state policies that constrained the behavior of certain

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<sup>88</sup> Mardin (2006), 205-225.

social actors. Various other social forces in Turkey, whether Islamist, Kurdish or nationalist groups, have carried with them the capacity to influence the state from within but as recent Turkish history shows, especially outside it.

Furthermore, the level of interconnectedness between social movements and the state did not take place in the form of a zero-sum game.<sup>89</sup> Often, the state played a pivotal role in the formation or transformation of social movements, while at other times social movements also transformed the state. Still, on other occasions, the state has financially supported the establishment of some movements for political change due to the increasingly prominent status that other groups began to achieve.

In what follows, the rest of this chapter aims to provide historical context and empirical support as to how state-society relations in Turkey proceeded from a perspective that partially draws on Migdal's notion of state-in-society, as opposed to Mardin's approach that theorizes just the reverse. This posits that the influence of social movements was not merely incidental but instrumental to the rise of the political power of the AKP, rather than a model based on Mardin's center-periphery analysis that sees state power of elite actors as irrevocably originating within the state, a tautology and contradiction in terms.

### **Opposition from Within: “The Second Group” And Their Continuous Legacy**

The center has always contained elements of the periphery. William Hale and Serif Mardin himself offer historical outlines of this, beginning as early as 1923-1926, to show how prominent figures representing the periphery existed within the center. The social forces in question were known as the “Second Group” and its members were well-established figures of the previous

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<sup>89</sup> Migdal (2001), 23.

“center” under the sultanate.<sup>90</sup> Mardin identified these public figures as “alienated members of the official class,” for they formulated different policies than the First Group concerning the future direction of the country.<sup>91</sup>

Members of the Second Group, despite the fact that they were not included among the elite core of the Kemalist ruling class, occupied vital elite positions and commissions – both military and civilian – and fulfilled these critical tasks in the founding of modern Turkish Republic. The Second Group had a different vision of political unity than that of Atatürk and his followers regarding the future direction of the country. Essentially, they advocated decentralization, economic liberalism, and anti-secular policies. Serif Mardin illustrated the differences as follows:

“[During the Turkish War of Independence (1920-1922)] These men formulated a series of extremely interesting policies regarding representation, the military, religious instruction, and religious practice. They wanted to impose a 5-year residency requirement in an electoral district as a prerequisite to candidacy for election as deputy; they attempted to control the military and began to attach the gendarmerie to the Ministry of the Interior, stating that the gendarmes were preying on the civilian population; they strongly supported education through religious schools; and they passed a statute prohibiting the consumption of alcohol.”<sup>92</sup>

On the other hand, the “first group,” including Atatürk, İsmet İnönü and his supporters, had a different vision of elite unity. Contrary to the Second Group, statism occupied a central place in animating their idea of progress. Mardin contended that the conceptual architecture of the state as the only legitimate actor of change originated from a centuries old Ottoman state tradition, which was protecting the state’s concentrated authority from possible penetration by the

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<sup>90</sup> Hale, William. 2011. “The Turkish Republic and its Army, 1923-1960,” *Turkish Studies* 12 (2): 192. Serif Mardin. 2006. “Center – Periphery as a Concept for the Study of Social Transformation,” Pp., 309-310 in Mardin, Serif. 2006. *Religion, Society, and Modernity in Turkey*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

<sup>91</sup> Mardin (2006), 309

<sup>92</sup> Mardin (2006), 310.



“periphery.”<sup>93</sup> Within this tradition there was embedded elite and institutional distrust of the periphery, and such a predisposition continued under the CHP’s single-party rule, creating a political environment where the center aspired to transform society against its will.<sup>94</sup>

However, closer examination reveals that such a distinct cleavage was not ostensibly manifest as depicted. In fact, even as demonstrated by Mardin, elements that made up the center were never fully unified. The Second Group also existed in the center, and its opposition took different forms as domestic and global contexts changed and as new forms of domination produced new forms of resistance. Members of the opposition continued to propose alternative visions of the future, if not alternative interpretations of the past. Such alternative discourse/articulation of the past became an important tool for Recep Tayyip Erdogan even after almost half a century later. He invoked similar discourses, mainly derived from the Second Group’s opposition, time again during his speeches to garner political support. The Second Group’s opposition mainly focused on criticizing the way Turkish statism approached domestic economic development. Social policies introduced by the CHP, which structured social life, was at the forefront of political debates in the parliament. Following Atatürk’s death in 1938, ongoing interaction between these centers of state and social power transformed political discourses in the National Assembly and pushed the limits of Kemalists’ ideas of progress.

It was not until the 1970s that leftist and Kurdish movements were able to muster the necessary financial and political capital to collectively mobilize with other social forces. It is, however,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Many AK Party members share this view. For instance, Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat contends: “When you look at the governments that came to power since 1946, since the initiation of the multiparty politics in Turkey, you recognize that the civilian leadership actually did not govern the state. What did they do? They guaranteed the salaries and compensations of the civilian and military bureaucrats, who were in control. There was the impression that there are elections, therefore there is democracy, for the outsiders, however, the people were always left in “the periphery.” They never had a real say in the governance of the country. In the few instances where they managed to obtain influence, there had been a military coup or some sort of military intervention. Each one of these interventions, in my opinion, was a rematch against the people.” Interview with Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat, AK Party founder, ex-member, deputy, Ankara, Turkey. September 9, 2014.

difficult to posit such a dynamic in the context of Islamist mobilization. Islamist movements remained as a vocal center of opposition to the state since the inception of the modern Turkish Republic.

### **Divergence On the Economic Policy Within the Kemalist Movement as an Example of the Influence That Other Centers of Power Exercised On Government Policy**

Since the time of Atatürk and his ideological contemporaries—especially the First Group—consolidated their power in the late 1920s, their control of the state capacity and resources was unsurprisingly concentrated on centralizing support for systematic social and economic reform. Post-WWI Turkey suffered from very high levels of poverty, the country was significantly underdeveloped, hence national economic development became the most urgent priority. The question of how to achieve that goal, however, was never quite resolved. While the First Group advocated unwavering fidelity to statist policies, others saw statism as a temporary, stop-gap measure that was over the long-term not the answer.

Celal Bayar (1884–1987), who served in various cabinet positions in CHP governments and later became the director of İş Bank, the first major bank formed during the initial years of the Republic, represented a clear divergence from İnönü’s views on statism.<sup>95</sup> Bayar, who became the third president of Turkish Republic, was trained as a banker and viewed statism as an practical mechanism for growing the economy and building state infrastructure, which would in principle benefit the private sector. On the other hand, Bayar believed that İnönü’s vision of a state led economy included a “narrow statism” where İnönü was convinced, particularly after his

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<sup>95</sup> VanderLippe, John M. 2005. *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: İsmet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi-Party System, 1938 – 1950*. State University of New York Press: NY, 24-25.

visit to the Soviet Union in 1932, that active use of central economic planning and a strong policy of statism was necessary for the post-war economic development of the country.<sup>96</sup> In an interview conducted in 1974, Bayar reflected upon his experiences and views:

İnönü is a soldier. His views on the economy stemmed from his experience in the Quartermaster General's Office. Of course, Quartermaster General Office is a grand organization. It supplies all the things that a military would need. That includes iron, coal, food, clothing, etc... It's the economic branch of the military and the biggest consumer is the military itself. As a modern military they must know the economics of such dealings. However they [the military/soldiers] consider the situation [conducting economic policy] from a narrow perspective and they want to fulfill [economic policy] according to that logic. İnönü's view [on economic policy] was very firm and he considered the situation from a narrow perspective. Then, he had a disdain for private entrepreneurs. I mention this as a characteristic issue [of İnönü's]. [This was his line of thinking:] People are tax evaders, private entrepreneurs are profiteers, this and that are landed gentry, those are cruel men... After his visit to Russia [back then the Soviet Union] this [disposition] was even stronger.<sup>97</sup>

İnönü believed that the only way he could prevent Turkey from entering yet another devastating world war was to increase the state's control of all aspects of society and the everyday life of Turkish citizens, from economic production and the consumption of goods to implementing restrictions on free speech, political expression, and freedom of the press. While his success in foreign policy helped Turkey escape the degradations of the Second World War, his domestic policies have not been viewed as favorably. Turkish society coped with extreme and heretofore unseen levels of poverty under İnönü's presidency during the single-party rule of the CHP,<sup>98</sup> and the party blamed war conditions for economic deprivation. Although there was some truth in that claim, it didn't help with the party's growing unpopularity.

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<sup>96</sup> Ipekci, Abdi. November 12, 1974. "Her Hafta Bir Sohbet" [A Conversation Every Week], *Milliyet*. Retrieved from <http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr> (October 8, 2014)

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Metin Toker describes how awful the conditions were during those days with a few anecdotes: "Now, I recall those days after all these years. The fights over bread within families, with arguments "who ate more, who ate less?" was never missing. Supposedly, laborers were given ration cards which would allow them to get more food because they worked with their body more than anyone else however these cards were also sold in plenty on the black market. Government employees and people were divided as if they were two distinct classes and the state was in a struggle to at least somewhat protect and provide its own employees." Toker notes that people resented

The CHP was leading a revolution in light of the Kemalist ideology. The Kemalist vision of elite and social unity, which was identified in a set of ideological promulgations regarding nationalism, republicanism and secularism, and how they all stood to be collectively encapsulated within statist policies, was foisted upon society by Kemalists, who were at the time in control of the state. Like all top-down revolutions, the implementation of change was beholden to policies that tolerated coercion, intimidation and the imprisonment of political opponents. However, this process also unfolded in a way that was inclusive of the other social and cultural centers of power in the country. When the war in Europe ended, these centers of power voiced their concern with regard to relaxing state control of the economy and political participation in national politics.

During this period, a dichotomy emerged within the CHP with respect to support and opposition for Turkey's transition to a multi-party political system. Following the end of Second World War, Kemalists increasingly supported the necessity of creating an inclusive and competitive political system that included other important sociocultural actors within Turkish society. İsmet İnönü, Atatürk's closest friend and the 'national chief' of the Republic, was convinced that the continuity of the regime depended on opening up the system. On May 19, 1945, following a discussion on trajectory of Turkey's political future, Nihat Erim—a promising, young parliament member at the time – shared his views as such:

Our current [political] system is based on one person, who is in power. This type of administrations usually start very bright, even continue brighter for a while. But there is no end to it. When that one person steps down from the stage, the aftermath remains unknown. Single party regimes collapse because they cannot operate according to normal democratic procedures or at the very least they collapse because they cannot transition fully to such a system. Among the ruins, a lot of work that had been done with much trouble also gets

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government's double standards and perceived the situation something that always worked to their disadvantage because for instance for sugar and cloth government employees and the rest of society paid different prices. Toker, Metin. 1990. *Demokrasimizin İsmet Paşalı Yılları (1944-1973): Tek Partiden Çok Partiye (1944-1950)* v.1. Bilgi Yayınevi: Istanbul, Turkey, 22-23.

wasted. We must protect our count from such a fate. We should rapidly transition to a system where there is serious checks and opposition.<sup>99</sup>

And İnönü responded, saying “I can spend my life under the single party regime. However, I’m thinking the aftermath. I’m thinking what happens after me. Therefore, we should get to work at once.”<sup>100</sup>

### **The Establishment of Multi-Party System: Competing Ideas of the Statist Vs. Moderate Kemalists, Islamists, And The Suppression of “Far Left” And “Far Right” Social Movements**

Hard-liners in the CHP continued to propose revolutionary laws and believed that it was too early to open up the political system because Kemalist reforms had not yet been fully internalized by Turkish society at large. Perhaps the most striking of these reforms to be proposed was on May 14, 1945. The ruling CHP government submitted a land reform bill, which immediately became a focus of criticism and served as a venue for the opposition to collectively organize against. During this period, the moderate wing of the CHP, which advocated the softening of statist policies, the enhancement of political rights, and the establishment of a multi-party political system, as well as Islamists, who preserved a long-standing disdain for every step that the CHP taken to pursue Kemalism, began to increasingly act collectively.

When the parliament discussions were publicized, the land reform bill hastened a strong united front against the CHP’s statist policies. Supporters of the bill advocated that Turkish peasants had suffered under the landed gentry for centuries, and that such long-standing inequities would

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<sup>99</sup> Toker (1990), 57.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

come to an end if redistribution of the land was possible. Providing land for the landless peasants who could not support themselves would finally correct this centuries old injustice.<sup>101</sup> For critics, on the other hand, the bill was a clear violation of property rights and it was the epitome of statism. The land that was proposed to be distributed consisted three types: larger private estates of more than 5,000 dönüms (1235.5 acres), state-owned land, and estates of religious foundations (*vakıf-waqfs*).<sup>102</sup> The bill prohibited any individual from owning more than 5,000 dönüms of land.<sup>103</sup>

It is almost impossible to not identify the collective sense of outrage this bill precipitated. In the 1940s, there was an over-abundance, if not outright monopolization, of state-land that could be distributed for agricultural purposes to landless peasants without violating the property rights of large land owners. If the problem was that extant agricultural land was not cultivated efficiently, thereby causing food shortages, that could also have been resolved by introducing other measures such as providing financial and technical assistance to landowners on how to increase crop efficiency.<sup>104</sup> Enacting a law that allowed confiscation of private land could only serve one purpose, and that was targeting the elite class of large land owners, a strong component of the “periphery” in Turkey. Naturally, the bill terrified the population it inexorably impacted the most, and the bill was “born dead”<sup>105</sup> because certain non-state actors of the periphery had already registered their opposition within the center.

Discussions surrounding the land reform bill in the Assembly finally revealed the split in opinion with regard to economic policies that would reverberate throughout the next generation.

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<sup>101</sup> Karaömerlioğlu, M. Asim. 2000. “Elite Perceptions of Land Reform in Early Republican Turkey,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 27 (3): 115 – 141.

<sup>102</sup> VanderLippe (2005), 115.

<sup>103</sup> Toker (1990), 57.

<sup>104</sup> Avcıoğlu, Doğan. 1987. *Türkiye'nin Düzeni: Dün, Bugün, Yarın [The Social Order of Turkey: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow]* Özyılmaz Matbaası: İstanbul, 364 – 365.

<sup>105</sup> Avcıoğlu (1987), 365.

They also marked the birth of an opposition party led by Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, Refik Koraltan, Fuat Köprülü, and Emin Sazak, all parliament members from the CHP. Menderes and Sazak were large landowners. Köprülü came from a distinguished family of imperial bureaucrats (the Köprülüler), and Koraltan was a lawyer.<sup>106</sup> Turkey's new opposition party, the Democrat Party (DP), founded on January 7, 1946, attracted significant attention from the electorate, and the 1950 general elections ended the CHP's twenty-three years of uncontested rule in power.

The main political issues preceding the DP's founding continued after the party came to power in 1950. The DP took a different tact than the CHP with regard to economic development, the role of state, and the role of religion in everyday life. The party carried the legacy and ideas of the Second Group in the Assembly. Such direction was observable in the discourse that new DP members voiced from the platform during the land reform bill talks and the 1945 budget discussions.

Menderes served as the Chair of the Agricultural Committee and from the beginning he opposed the spirit of the land reform bill. Menderes believed that severe food shortages that Turkey experienced during the war years were due to the underdeveloped state of agriculture infrastructure rather than the unequal distribution of land. If the government could support the farmers, and if they could be provided with sufficient credit, tools and information, villagers would produce more than enough agricultural products, he argued.<sup>107</sup>

Similarly Eskişehir deputy Emin Sazak argued:

“[Resources] are wasted on government spending and employees. The government gives rise to high cost of living more than the private sector. The nation can do everything, but statism is a barrier to this... Under statism we assigned people tasks that they could not perform and we pushed them to lengths they could not reach. But today there are no clear

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<sup>106</sup> Again, leading and respected members of “the periphery.”

<sup>107</sup> Akandere, Osman. 1998. *Milli Şef Dönemi: Çok Partili Hayata Geçişte Rol Oynayan İç ve Dış Tesirler* [The National Chief Period: The Role of the Domestic and Foreign Influences on the Passage to Multi-Party Life] İz Yayıncılık: İstanbul, 358 – 60. Dilipak Abdurrahman. 1989. *Yakın Tarihimiz: İnönü Dönemi*. [Our Recent History: The İnönü Period] Beyan Yayınları: İstanbul, 80. VanderLippe (2005): 116.

limits. The state is doing everything. The state must take its hand from the work it did during the war.”<sup>108</sup>

In line with the previous argument, Hikmet Bayur criticized the statist development model and the CHP government’s assurance that a state planned economy would bring the prosperity that the country had sought for so long:

“But it is dangerous to walk if one concentrates only on the future, without looking at the suffering and destitution of today. Like somebody who catches their foot on a rock while looking at the sky, it is not right to forget the current situation of the people while making a revolution.”<sup>109</sup>

On social policy issues concerning Islam’s place in public life, the CHP recognized the necessity of softening the reformist, secularist laws that were in place. The lesson of the Free Party—and earlier the Progressive Republican Party—was that there was significant popular opposition to Kemalist reforms. Such reaction came, in part, from Islamists. Now that there was a shift towards competitive multi-party politics, the CHP attempted to find other ways to appeal to Turkish society, which largely remained immune to the reforms when compared to the small population city dwelling populations. In the early 1950s, 80% of Turkey’s population lived in rural areas.<sup>110</sup>

Providing Islamic training in Islamic doctrine and law in government schools was a long dream of Islamists and conservatives from all ideological backgrounds. What is intriguing regarding the discourse on religious education in state schools is how it cuts across very different ideological backgrounds, yet still produces similar responses. A manifestation of this dynamic was the

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<sup>108</sup> Goloğlu, Mahmut. 1974. *Milli Şef Dönemi (1939 – 1945)*. Turhan Kitapevi: Ankara, 345-346. VanderLippe (2005), 116

<sup>109</sup> Goloğlu (1974), 347; VanderLippe (2005), 116.

<sup>110</sup> In his speech when introducing the program of the First Menderes Government (May 22, 1950 – March, 9 1951), Adnan Menderes underlines that the fact that 80 % of Turkish population is occupied with agriculture as their primary source of generating income: “80 % of our population is occupied with agriculture. In Turkey, agriculture forms the main source and base of the national economy. Because of this reason, economic development in every area and increase in national income depend on strengthening this main base.” Sükan, Faruk. 1991. *Başbakan Adnan Menderes’in Meclis Konuşmaları (1950 - 1960)* [Prime Minister Adnan Menderes’ National Assembly Speeches]. Kültür Ofset Limited: Ankara, 9.



debate on religious education in public schools, which took place quite frequently in the “center.”

For instance, on December 24, 1946, even before the DP was officially founded, during a debate at the National Assembly, CHP deputies Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver (Istanbul) and Muhittin Baha Pars (Bursa) made a motion to reintroduce religious instruction in public schools, claiming that such training would provide a barrier and “strengthen spiritual resistance against the threat of communism.”<sup>111</sup> Similarly, during the same gathering, Pars argued:

“consciences are like countries and if you leave them defenseless, the enemy will invade them. Our best defense against dangerous ideologies is to spread our own belief.”<sup>112</sup>

The same rhetorical discourse was appropriated and employed by conservatives and Islamists time and again against different “threats” to society. After communism lost its appeal following the collapse of Soviet Union, drugs became the archenemy, which continues to present. Attempts at legitimizing mandatory religious instruction, particularly policies that heavily favor Sunni-Islam, appeared most recently in President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s speech given during an anti-drug event organized by the Green Crescent Society (Yeşilay) on September 29, 2014:

Nowhere in the world you can see compulsory physics, chemistry, mathematics courses being a matter of debate. Somehow, compulsory religious education becomes a matter of debate. If this continues to be a debate, why then people complain about drug addiction, violence, and terror? If you make the compulsory religious education a matter of debate then of course drug abuse proceeds [becomes a problem]. Violence comes, racism comes and fills the gap [from not receiving religious education]. In the recent weeks, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against Turkey and in favor of an arrangement to ensure a student to be exempt from compulsory religious education courses. This decision is a wrong decision. We have seen parents so miserable because their children are addicted to alcohol, to drugs. Their dearest children are gone... Should we remain indifferent [to this

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<sup>111</sup> Original translation comes from Jäeschke, Gothard. 1955. *Die Türkei in den Jahren 1942-1951* [Turkey in the Years 1942-1951] Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Karpas, Kemal H. 1959. *Turkey’s Politics: The Transition to a Multiparty System*. Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 276 – 277.

<sup>112</sup> Geyikdağı, Mehmet Y. 1984. *Political Parties in Turkey: The Role of Islam*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 66.

situation] and say oh, well it's freedom? To begin with, the Constitution of Turkey gives us the ultimate authority to make this fight.<sup>113</sup>

In a similar vein, during the seventh CHP Congress in 1947, Suphi and Pars' motion was brought forward, but this time with the support of several other CHP delegates. Abdülkadir Güney (Çorum) stressed that “all vices and evil come from neglecting our religion,” “nations that strengthened their religions have reached to the good state of social evolution and became successful. Yet, the ones which neglected it became backwards.”<sup>114</sup> Therefore, religious education had to be compulsory in government schools. Şükrü Nayman (Kayseri) argued that “Today's need is the spiritual nourishment that Turkish nation and youth necessitates and yearn for greatly.”<sup>115</sup> Finally, Tahsin Banguoğlu (Bingöl) summarized Hamdullah Suphi's demands as follows:

“ [The state should] 1-Provide religious education. 2- Look after religious institutions [implying mainly the mosques]. 3- Rehabilitate [Train] clergy.”<sup>116</sup>

In contemporary Turkish politics, there are numerous cases in which conservatives and Islamists, regardless of party affiliation, voicing their demands with regard to state mandated religious education. In 1948, CHP deputies Ibrahim Arvas<sup>117</sup> (Van) and Fatih Gökmen (Konya), both prominent members of the “periphery,” working from within the “center” proposed a bill to

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<sup>113</sup> Cemal, Hasan. October 1, 2014. “Erdoğan'la Davutoğlu'nun takiyeciliği!” [Erdoğan and Davutoğlu's Religious Deception], *T24*. Retrieved from <http://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/hasan-cemal/erdoganla-davutoglundun-takiyeciligi,10283> (October 7, 2014).

<sup>114</sup> CHP Yedinci Büyük Kurultayı. 2/12/1947 Salı. Dokunzuncu Birleşim, [CHP's 7<sup>th</sup> Grand Congress 2/12/1947 Tuesday, Ninth Session] 450-451.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> CHP Yedinci Büyük Kurultayı. 2/12/1947 Salı. Dokunzuncu Birleşim, [CHP's 7<sup>th</sup> Grand Congress 2/12/1947 Tuesday, Ninth Session] 466.

<sup>117</sup> Ibrahim Arvas came from a distinguished family of Islamic scholars. Some famous figures from the Arvas family includes: Sheik Muhammedi Veli, Sheik Abdürrahman- ı Arvasi, Gavs-i Hizan, Seyit Fehim-i Arvasi, Seyit Muhammed Arvasi, Sheik Hamit Pasha (Ibrahim Arvasi's father), Abdülhakim-i Arvasi and Sheik Muhammed Emimi Arvasi. Arvas, Ibrahim. 2007. *Tarihi Hakikatler* [Historical Facts - Biography] Istanbul: Biyografi Net, 15-16. Arvas was also friends with Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, who was a prominent Islamist modern philosopher, poet, columnist, and activist. Recep Tayyip Erdogan frequently quotes Kısakürek in his speeches.

establish reopening schools for *imams* and a faculty of theology. The same year, the Ministry of Education introduced a ten-month Imam and preacher courses, which were given to secondary school graduates. These courses were institutionalized and embodied in the Imam-Hatip Schools in 1951 under the first DP government. The decision to introduce religion courses in elementary schools, though optional at the time, arrived in 1949.<sup>118</sup>

The point of these historical episodes is to surface how some current conceptualizations of the center, or state, are at odds with the history of contentious politics in Turkey. Peripheral politics, or the capacity of non-state actors to exert social and political power through the institutions of the center, have been active in crafting and passing parliamentary bills that became law. That occurred before and during the nascent period of competitive party politics is all the more revealing. An attendant question is to what degree could social movements influence the state to advance their own agendas? Collective opposition to land reform was doubtlessly expedited by elite opposition as well, but how would such a scenario play out when it was not? In the case of leftist movements, such influence was close to non-existent. Leftism barely penetrated Turkish villages, and leftist mobilization was limited to few major urban cities. As there was no real urban working class as we currently understand it in the modern sense of the phrase, the leftist debate was tantamount to an intra-urban elite debate.

It is debatable to argue that Hasan Ali Yücel, a long standing minister of education, and the founder of the Village Institutes (1940-1954) (Köy Enstitüleri), was a “leftist.” However, what is not debatable is that his policies were constructed in a progressive spirit.<sup>119</sup> Village Institutes, as a vanguard of progressive ideas, were established to train village children as teachers, who were later stationed in their own villages following graduation. Their primary goal was to spread the

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<sup>118</sup> Geyikdağı (1984), 67-68.

<sup>119</sup> Şengör, Celal M. 2001. *Hasan Ali Yücel ve Türk Aydınlanması* [Hasan Ali Yücel and the Turkish Enlightenment] Ankara, Turkey: TÜBİTAK Matbaası, 101-146.

ideals of the republic and to fight illiteracy, ignorance, and superstition in the villages. These teachers were equipped with modern technical and scientific knowledge in order to help villagers increase their agricultural yields and production capacity.

The Islamist and conservative opposition in the Assembly reversed Yücel's secularizing policies. In 1946, the curriculum of Village Institutes was changed, and the schools were segregated according to gender.<sup>120</sup> Later, in 1954, they were closed under the pretext of fighting communism by the DP government.

Leftist movements were marginalized in the early years of the republic on grounds that they were “communist devils” or “Godless anarchists.” The price of being branded a communist was often too much to overcome, and leftist movements were therefore not able to mobilize as freely as other social movements. Moreover, the reputation of leftist movements was exacerbated by the specter of cold war politics. However, despite all these inherent disadvantages, they were among the most active political groups to mobilize against state policy during this period. The 1961 Turkish constitution, which was prepared following the 1960 military coup, was a good example of how this influence unfolded.

### **The 1960 Military Coup and The Influence of Social Movements in The Military**

The Turkish Army, due to its unique position as the founder and protector of the modern Republic, has historically possessed outsized political power. However, it suffered from a problem, termed by David Hotham, of “dual legitimacy.”<sup>121</sup> On the one hand, as it was clearly articulated in Article 35 of the Armed Forces Internal Service Law of 1935, the institution's duty is “to protect and defend the Turkish homeland and the Republic of Turkey, as determined in the

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<sup>120</sup> VanderLippe (2005), 184.

<sup>121</sup> Hotham, David. 1972. *The Turks*. London, UK: Cox & Wyman, 63.

Constitution,”<sup>122</sup> which made a possible justification for the military’s intervention in civilian politics. On the other hand, soldiers aspired to achieve westernization, which as a matter of actual policy, meant democratizing the state. While this required that the military act with self-constraint so as not to intervene in party politics, the former commitment to secularism necessitated that the Kemalist revolution be protected at all costs. Ideologically as well, the army chose secularism over democratization. Additionally, there were conflicting leftist and right-wing interpretations of Kemalism, which produced ideological splits in the military. Thirdly, there were personal rivalries among the high command with regard to promotion to the Chief of the General Staff, which is the commander of the Turkish armed forces. Importantly, the second dichotomy, or differing interpretations of Kemalism, was the result of sociopolitical mobilization among members of the military.

The unprecedented rivalry between the CHP and the DP, as well as the corresponding ideological fragmentation represented by both parties, made itself most apparent in the ranks of the armed force. For instance, it was claimed that pro-CHP generals proposed to İsmet İnönü an offer to hand over power back to the CHP after the DP was elected in the 1950 general elections. İnönü, however, completely denied those allegations, saying, “They could not have come to me with such an offer, nor could I have approached them to ask for such a thing.”<sup>123</sup>

On the other hand, Orhan Birgit, a member of the press from Ulus newspaper) presented a different account of that ‘rumor’ to journalist Mehmet Ali Birand. He stated that he witnessed a

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<sup>122</sup> Hale, William. (2011): 195. Article 35 of the Armed Forces Internal Service Law of 1935, in the same wording, remained in effect until July 2013, when the AK Party majority parliament amended the article as follows: “The duty of the armed forces is to defend the Turkish homeland against external dangers and threats, and to ensure the preservation and strengthening of the armed forces in a manner that will provide deterrence, to perform duties abroad as assigned by the Turkish Grand Assembly, and to help maintain international peace.” *Hürriyet Daily News*, Ankara, “Turkish Parliament Oks Change on Coup Pretext Article,” Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-parliament-oks-change-on-coup-pretext-article.aspx?pageID=238&nID=50706&NewsCatID=338>

<sup>123</sup> Toker, Metin. 1990. *Demokrasimizin İsmet Paşalı Yılları (1944-1973): DP’nin Altın Yılları (1950-1954)* [DP’s Golden Years] Ankara, Turkey: Bilgi Yayınevi, 23-24.

phone conversation on the night of May 14, the day the CHP lost power in the 1950 general elections, between the first army commander general Noyan and CHP party inspector Sadi Irmak in which General Noyan suggested that if the National Chief “gives the green light” they could intervene and nullify the election results. Birgit told Birand that Irmak communicated the message with Ankara and later waited for a response, which came from İnönü saying “starting with the one who conveyed that message, I want it to be known that all state institutions must respect the way national will was manifested.”<sup>124</sup>

William Hale has noted that many officers in the army were unhappy with the catch phrase “CHP + army = power” and that a significant group of officers effectively aligned with the DP in order to put an end to that understanding.<sup>125</sup> Similarly Birand, by relying on interviews that he conducted, concluded that the army refrained at this early stage from intervening initially because of the presence of pro-DP officers, and also the national chief’s negative attitude towards any intervention by the military.<sup>126</sup> Hale revealed that Colonel Seyfi Kurtbek (who later resigned from the army and served as Minister of Defense in the 1952 Menderes government), Major Cemal Yıldırım, and General Fahri Belen came to an agreement that they would force the interventionist officers to repeat the elections if the DP victory was nullified.<sup>127</sup>

The Menderes era between 1950-1960 was a period where there were attempts by the government to institutionalize civilian control and restructure the military in line with the requirements of modern warfare. For instance, during the initial years of the Menderes government, Refik Şevket Ince, Minister of Defense in the first Menderes cabinet, proposed a bill that would allow officers to be tried in civilian courts much like regular Turkish citizens.

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<sup>124</sup> Birand, Mehmet Ali, Can Dünder, and Bülent Çaplı. 2007 (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). *Demirkırat: Bir Demokrasinin Doğuşu*. [Ironhorse: Birth of a Democracy] Istanbul, Turkey: Doğan Yayıncılık, 47-48.

<sup>125</sup> Hale (2011), 197.

<sup>126</sup> Birand (2007), 48-49.

<sup>127</sup> Hale (2011), 197.

However, the military's elite ruling class voiced their opposition to that proposal. They claimed such reform was untimely and would only cause "allergic reactions" in the armed forces because the army had not completed its training with respect to democracy and that officers had not properly acquired that level of education yet.<sup>128</sup> It seemed even pro-DP officers were against the proposal aimed at reducing the military's autonomy. Menderes inevitably pulled back and he lost his Minister of Defense to this cause.

The second attempt at reorganizing the military's internal structure by rendering it less autonomous and more accountable was made by a retired soldier, namely DP deputy and minister of defense Seyfi Kurtbek. His proposal included a modernization project that aimed to incorporate the chief of the general staff's office in the ministry of defense, and reducing the top-heaviness of the military by retiring at least one third of high-ranked officers.<sup>129</sup> Menderes gathered his cabinet, discussed the reform with president Bayar and expressed his support. However, he decided to postpone the introduction of the plan because, according to Birand, he did not want to run afoul of the military establishment during the early years of his administration. Kurtbek resigned following the withdrawal of the bill.

Interestingly enough, Seyfi Kurtbek's plan, which called for restructuring the armed forces, albeit with the large exception that it would not fully institutionalize civilian control, was executed with the EMINSU purge later, and by the 1960 military coup officers who named themselves as the National Unity Committee (NUC). The NUC executed the EMINSU purge between August 3-4, 1960 by removing roughly 5,000 army officers, including 235 generals and admirals, from their posts to prevent a possible counter-coup from the pro-DP officers.<sup>130</sup> The

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<sup>128</sup> Birand (2007), 78.

<sup>129</sup> Birand (2007), 78; Hale (2011), 197.

<sup>130</sup> Hale, William. 1994. *Turkish Politics and the Military*. London, UK: Rutledge, 125. Hale notes 35,000 officers were forced to retire but this does not seem right, since it is a very high number. Different sources cite different

officers that were forced to retire later formed an association called Emekli Inkılap Subaylar Derneği (EMINSU) [Association of Retired Officers of the Revolution] in order to obtain their posts. Their attempts, however, failed because many of them had already obtained civilian posts elsewhere. The NUC, just before handing power over to the newly elected civilians, made a deal named as the 24 October 1961 Çankaya Protocol, which prohibited EMINSU officers from returning to the military.<sup>131</sup> The EMINSU purge not only removed the potential pro-DP officers from the military, but it also ended its top-heaviness.<sup>132</sup>

Perhaps the commanders were right when they opposed Kurtbek's plan in 1953. The military did not have the capacity to institutionalize an unconditional commitment to democracy among its ranks. A closer look at the list of soldiers who organized and implemented the 1960 coup seems to support that argument. In fact, the 1960 coup revealed three things of particular import: First, senior officers did not have control over several of the groups of lower rank officers.<sup>133</sup> Second, the way young officers reacted to the initiatives of the Menderes government showed

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numbers though none of them point to a number that is higher than 7,500. The official number declared was 5,000. Landau, Jacob M. 1974. *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 11. Landau cites "over 5, 000." Örtülü, Erdoğan. 1966. *Üç İhtilalin Hikayesi: 13 Kasım – 22 Şubat – 21 Mayıs* [The Story of Three Coups: November 13, February 22, May 21]. Ankara, Turkey: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 26. Örtülü noted "7, 500 junior and senior officers were forced to retire." Aydemir, şevket Süreyya. 1999. *İhtilalin Mantığı ve 27 Mayıs İhtilali* [Logic of the Coup and the May 27 Coup]. Ankara, Turkey: Remzi Kitabevi, 385. Aydemir noted the number as 5,000.

<sup>131</sup> Hale (1994): 125, Bardakçı, Murat. March 4, 2010. "21 Ekim protokolünü hatırlar mısınız?" [Do you remember the October 21 Protocol?], *Habertürk*. Retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/murat-bardakci/225947-21-ekim-protokolunu-hatirlar-misiniz> (December 4, 2014).

<sup>132</sup> Talat Aydemir, one of the influential figures in the planning of the May 27 coup, noted in his memoirs that the NUC viewed the EMINSU members and the DP supporters on the same front. They believed that the organization had plans to organize a rebellion against the NUC with the support of the dismissed DP members. Talat wrote that the NUC decided to show no tolerance for protest walks and gatherings in support of the EMINSU's cause. To that end the committee gave orders to apprehended 55 EMINSU members and supporters in Ankara. Aydemir, Talat. 1968. *Talat Aydemir'in Hatıraları* [The Memoirs of Talat Aydemir.] Istanbul, Turkey: May Mabaası, 87-89.

<sup>133</sup> Demirel, Mehmet Arif. 2012. *27 Mayıs : Masallar Ve Gerçekler*, [May 27: Tales and Facts], İstanbul, Turkey: Toplumsal Yayıncılık, 19. Names and ages of the members of National Unity Committee, at the time when they initiated the 1960 military coup : **Army commander Cemal Gürsel (65)**, Colonel Ekrem Acuner (44), Major Fazıl Akkoyunlu (49), Colonel Refet Aksoyoglu, (40), Colonel Mucip Ataklı (41), Lieutenant Rifat Baykal (36), Lieutenant colonel Emanullah Çelebi (35), Lieutenant Ahmet Er (33), Major Orhan Erkanlı (36), Major Vehbi Ersü (42), Lieutenant Numan Esin (31), Major Suphi Gürsoytrak (35), Lieutenant colonel Orhan Kabibay (42), Major Kadri Kaplan (39), Lieutenant colonel Suphi Karaman (38), Major Muzaffer Karan (43), Lieutenant Kamil Karavelioğlu (33), Colonel Osman Köksal (44), Major Münir Köseoğlu (38), Colonel Fikret Kuytak (45), Colonel Sami Küçük (44), **General Cemal Madanoğlu (53)**, **General İrfan Baştuğ (52)**.



that the army's ideological commitment to Kemalism was stronger than its commitment to democracy. And third, under the circumstances, in 1960 staging a coup was not as difficult as one would imagine given the historical momentum involved in decades of state building that has socialized the bureaucracy into the institutional norms of the state.

Different sources cite different reasons for the diminution of DP support in the military. Hale notes that Seyfi Kurtbek's reformist agenda alienated and agitated the military beyond reasonable expectation. Birand traces it to the period when the DP government authorized changing the call for prayer from Turkish to Arabic. Nevertheless, both incidents happened in the initial years of the first Menderes government.

From a center-periphery approach, the events that led to the 1960 military coup could be viewed as an ongoing episode of contentious elite politics between civil and military bureaucrats who believed they commanded the levers of state power, and the periphery, which was pushed away from power through force only to return with the electoral support of disgruntled elites. However, a closer look in the temporal and spatial sequence of events signals that these episodes were as much about ideas and ideologies and the increased mobilizational push being made by peripheral social movements within state institutions such as the military, rather than the "center" resisting the periphery's attempted putsch of military elites. There is perhaps more validity to this perspective, and the often ephemeral nature of elite power than it is often afforded in conventional historical accounts.

With the establishment of the DP, Islamic movements had arrived at a point where they could propound their demands more often in the parliament. This included reversing the call for prayer from Turkish to Arabic, broadcasting Quranic recitations on public radio, making religious education at public schools compulsory, introducing religious courses in secondary schools, and

the reopening of the Institute of Islamic Studies initiatives. This collectively signaled that Islamists were able to push their demands more aggressively than the other centers of “peripheral” power.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, Islamist mobilization gradually gained ground beginning with the DP government’s direct and indirect encouragement of private initiatives favoring religion.

This was not the case for leftist movements, for they were marginalized by state actors and social forces and pushed to true periphery of Turkish party politics. However, leftist movements were still able to organize by drawing on discourses that reclaimed Kemalism as a progressive dogma, and in the 1970s they were for a period the strongest and most active movement in the country. The Turkish nationalist movement also benefitted from the initiation of multiparty politics and eventually evolved into the Nationalist Movement Party, which presented an alternative for the conservative electorate who, while nevertheless pious, were more likely to put national identity ahead of their identification with Islam.

The labels left or right, as is typically understood, hardly made sense for the CHP. This is only normal because the six tenets of Kemalism are a patchwork of different ideological strands ranging from nationalism, populism, liberalism, laicism, and fascism. They therefore appealed to movements from both wings of the political spectrum, with the large exception of Islamists. For instance, of the six Kemalist principles, statism and revolutionism maintained much greater ideological appeal to the left. The editor of the socialist *Yön* [Direction], Doğan Avcıoğlu, who had contacts with the army and CHP deputies, wrote that the transition to socialism could be achieved by reformulating Kemalism. The two Kemalist principles, statism and revolutionism, Avcıoğlu led movement claimed, ideologically legitimized the move towards socialism.<sup>135</sup> *Yön*

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<sup>134</sup> Geyikdağı (1984), 76-77.

<sup>135</sup> Avcıoğlu was later linked – though not proved – with a group of dissatisfied officers, who led an abortive coup a year after the 1960 coup under the leadership of Colonel Talat Aydemir.

was first published on December 20, 1961. A study of Ankara University students in 1965 indicated that the weekly was their favorite magazine.<sup>136</sup> Some prominent members and founders of *Yön*<sup>137</sup> found seats in the Constituent Assembly following the 1960 military coup. Doğan Avcıoğlu and Mümtaz Soysal were in the twenty-man Constitutional Commission, which was founded to draft the 1961 constitution.<sup>138</sup> The National Unity Committee, (NUC) which included officers who planned and executed the 1960 military coup, did not intervene with the Constitutional Commission's work and also accepted the final draft presented in May 1961 without major objections.<sup>139</sup>

Although the CHP claimed to be a “left of the center” party, this claim never really stuck precisely because of the somewhat inchoate nature of Kemalism and largely due to the party's pragmatic attempts to appeal to a broad a segment of society. While some CHP deputies were ostensibly left of center, others held decidedly nationalist sentiments. Their understanding of secularism and statism within party politics thus varied, and one could recognize from the debate at hand whether the state should or should not provide religious education during the seventh and eleventh Congress of the CHP, the party as whole claimed state taking an active role in the economy was seen necessary. Yet party members never seemed to reach a consensus as to how important a role the state should play in the economy.

With regard to the CHP's involvement in the May 27, 1960 military coup, there are a number of controversial historical claims. While some have suggested that the party provoked and

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Ulus, Özgür Mutlu. 2011. *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey: Military Coups, Socialist Revolution and Kemalism*. London: I.B. Tauris, 31-33.

<sup>136</sup> Ozankaya, Özer. 1966. “Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Siyasal Yönelimleri,” [Political Tendencies of the University Students], SBY Yayınları, No: 127, pg. 35. See also Landau (1974), 50.

<sup>137</sup> Founders: Doğan Avcıoğlu, İlhami Soysal and Mümtaz Soysal

<sup>138</sup> Uçar, Asaf. January 10, 1961. “20’ şer Kişilik Anayasa ve Seçim Komisyonlarının Seçimi de Dün Yapıldı” [20-man Constitution and Elections Committee Members Were Elected Yesterday], *Milliyet*. Pg 5. Retrieved from [http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/GununYayinlari/1AV689XHMuCPC\\_x2B\\_xJKFPVoQ\\_x3D\\_x3D](http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/GununYayinlari/1AV689XHMuCPC_x2B_xJKFPVoQ_x3D_x3D) (December 1, 2014)

<sup>139</sup> Hale, William. 1994. *Turkish Politics and the Military*. London, UK: Rutledge, 137.

therefore helped the military in realizing their objective to intervene by providing a justifiable excuse, others claimed that İsmet İnönü did everything he could do to prevent the coup from occurring. Another perspective claimed the CHP was not actively involved in the planning and the initiation of the coup, but that it also did not attempt to forestall it because the coup was executed against its rival, the DP.<sup>140</sup>

Given the circumstances, it is only reasonable to assume that the ideological composition of officers that made up the military reflected Turkish society at large, and surely its divisions were equal manifestations of society's differing views regarding Kemalism. In the context of the 1950s, this appeared in the form of pro and anti-DP policies. The fact that the 1960 coup was organized and carried out by a group of leftist lower-rank officers reveals that young officers were anti-DP because they believed that the DP's economic and social policies undermined Kemalism. Most pundits agree that if Menderes had managed to go to early elections, he would have had a fighting chance to obviate the military coup, not to mention the unfortunate circumstances of his own fate, from occurring. His execution proved a valuable lesson for social forces and elite actors in Turkish society, particularly the Kemalist military and Islamist right.

### **Growing Influence of Social Movements and The Military's Successful Efforts at Establishing a Tutelage Regime**

One area of consensus among civil military scholars is that the Turkish Armed Forces have consistently demonstrated a commitment to national development along western lines, and the same cannot be said of many of the classic and ideal type military regimes that once predominated throughout southern Europe, the Middle East and especially Latin America. The

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<sup>140</sup> Demirer (2012), 20.

military's reticence from assuming and exercising direct power of the state is also somewhat of an anomaly from third-wave military regimes throughout the world, where the chief executive was often the chief of the armed forces. Turkish Kemalism has also consistently entailed regional integration with Europe and the institutionalization of a democratic, liberal multiparty system. While political parties have been closed and banned and some party leaders have been expelled from active politics during the period of junta rule, a revolving door of politics resumed whereby most elite actors were inevitably given sanction to return to party politics. It is precisely because of this push and pull effect that elite actors have been able to occupy positions of state power while during other periods they have actively mobilize against it despite the impediments posed by episodic political purges and military coups. Stated differently, social forces that would have otherwise been either fully institutionalized or permanently purged in many other contexts were allowed to exist in a grey area where they were never fully sanctioned, but neither were they ever permanently proscribed.

A closer look at the 1960 National Unity Government (NUG) program reveals such purposeful intent by the military:

The main goal of the May 27, 1960 Revolution is to establish all the requirements of the democratic order as soon as possible. Bearing this purpose in mind a new constitution is being prepared. Equality of citizens, freedom of conscience and all of the other freedoms should be guaranteed. No person should be pressured or attacked in any way because of his opinions.<sup>141</sup>

Another essential point that this program revealed was the influence of leftist movements in the military. This influence is most apparent in the policies that the NUG formulated to avert economic underdevelopment in Turkey. The NUG's program delineated the role of the state in economic enterprise, and that it would continue to exist free of political interference and would

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<sup>141</sup> Geyikdağı (1984), 88.

be managed as such. It further explained that inflation would be reduced by avoiding deficit budget financing, investments would be backed by internal savings rather than by acquiring foreign debt, and finally, it outlined the founding of a new state agency, the State Economic Planning Institution, with the obvious implication that the military believed central economic planning was the solution to the country's economic woes and underdevelopment.<sup>142</sup> The redistribution of agricultural land, establishing standards for private production of goods, the importance of guaranteeing workers' rights such as fair wages, the state's obligation to provide and scrutinize humane working conditions, the founding of free and independent unions, and the legalizing of collective bargaining for state and private sector employees underline that it was the state's responsibility to provide social security to society.<sup>143</sup>

It is a commonsense notion that the 1960 coup was not a leftist revolution. It was a long standing ambition of the Turkish left to have the military's support because it was widely accepted that the only way to realize a leftist revolution was with the assistance of the army. A revolutionary proletariat did not exist and 'peasants' were characteristically conservative and Islamic. Moreover, religiousness cut-across class based cleavages in Turkey, and any ideology that marginalized religion was categorically doomed to fail in its potential to reach wider segments of society. Despite the obvious weight of leftist ideological discourses in the NUG program, the armed forces never sought to institutionalize socialism in Turkey. The institution was staunchly Kemalist, and Kemalism was evolving and reinventing itself—at least during this period—with the influence of leftist ideology as is readily apparent from the NUG program. With respect to reversing the DP's de-secularizing policies, in contrast to what was expected, the

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<sup>142</sup> Neziroğlu, İrfan and Tuncer Yılmaz. 2013. *TBMM Hükümetler – Programları ve Genel Kurul Görüşmeleri* cilt 2 (22 Nisan 1950 – 20 Kasım 1961) [Turkish Grand Assembly Governments – Programs and General Assembly Meetings v 2], Ankara, Turkey: TBMM Basımevi, 1310-1313. Geyikdağı (1984), 89.

<sup>143</sup> Geyikdağı (1984), 89.

junta regime chose to keep the changes that were made under successive DP governments. The Imam-Hatip schools and the Higher Islamic Institute were kept institutionalized. The call to prayer remained in Arabic.

### **Left or Right? Now or Later? Power Struggle Within the National Union Committee**

The 1960 military coup, at least in the characteristic way in which it was organized by lower rank officers and later assumed by senior officers,<sup>144</sup> resembles the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal. Though, in the Turkish case, a group of middle rank officers had planned, organized and implemented the coup, overthrowing not only the DP government but also the high command of the military. The NUC members did not know each other very well, and they subsequently only agreed on the necessity of staging a coup. Yet, they were deeply divided over the question of when to return power to civilian leadership, and also which direction to take with respect to the economy. The dual legitimacy problem embedded in the military resurfaced during NUC meetings: Should they return power to a democratically elected parliament immediately or following the implementation of social and economic reforms that they envisioned in order to address the nation's problems?

Four factions had been formed within the committee with respect to these questions. The 14s faction included Alparslan Türkeş (L)<sup>145</sup>, Orhan Kabibay, Orhan Erkanlı, Muzaffer Özdağ, Rıfat Baykal, Fazıl Akkoyunlu, Ahmet Er, Dündar Taşer, Numan Esin, Mustafa Kaplan, İrfan Solmaz, Şefik Soyyüce, Muzaffer Karan, Münir Köseoğlu. The 14s advocated that the NUC should stay in power for four years and then call for general elections. The 11s faction advocated

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<sup>144</sup> Or one can also say conspiratorial groups within the army had eventually overthrown the high command.

<sup>145</sup> (L): Leader.

going to general elections immediately. This group included Ahmet Yıldız (L), Haydar Tunçkanat, Şükran Özkaya, Selahattin Özgür, Emanullah Çelebi, Sezai Okan, Fikret Kuymak, Vehbi Ersü, Mücip Ataklı, Refet Akyosoğlu, and Ekrem Acuner. The 7s faction served to temper conflict between 14s and 11s. This group included Sami Küçük (L), Kamil Karavelioğlu, Suphi Karaman, Muzaffer Yurdakuler, Kadri Kaplan, and Mehmet Özgüneş. The 5s were composed mostly of generals and they aspired to act above these three groups as the most senior, experienced, and unbiased element of the NUC. Cemal Gürsel (President of the junta), Cemal Madanoğlu (Land Forces Logistics Commander), Osman Köksal (Commander of the Presidential Guard Regiment), Fahri Özdilek, and Sıtkı Ulay. Köksal and Madanoğlu were the only two members who maintained their active duty posts and occupied seats at the NUC.<sup>146</sup>

The NUC members also could not form a cohesive ideological bloc as to when democracy should resume. The committee members favored a range of ideologies from ultra-left to the ultra-right. Colonel Alparslan Türkeş, the deputy minister to president Cemal Gürsel, had been put on trial for disseminating Pan-Turkism, though he was acquitted. Now that he was at the NUC, he started taking initiatives in order to realize his vision of Kemalism, which revealed itself in the project he put forward to as the “culture union plan”.<sup>147</sup> Türkeş’s plans and his speeches reflected palpable discontent in the NUC. The 14s were ousted on November 13, 1960 from the NUC by the rest of the committee because of Türkeş’s ambitious plans and their position on prolonging military hegemony.

On the other hand, Talat Aydemir represented the nationalist-leftist wing in the military. Aydemir was not given a seat on the NUC because of his absence due to his military obligations

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<sup>146</sup> Örtülü (1966), 11, 18, 22-23. For a summary of the groupings within the NUC see Dağcı, Gül Tuba Taşpınar. 2006. *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Ordu Siyaset İlişkisi ve 27 Mayıs 1960 Askeri Darbesi. [Civil-Military Relations From the Ottomans to the Republic and the may 27 Coup]* İstanbul, Turkey: İlgi Yayınları, 82-83.

<sup>147</sup> Ulus (2011), 14-15.



during the Korean War. However, he managed to secure a post as the Commander of the War Academy (Harp Okulu Komutanı) and exercised a good deal of influence among junior officers. His vision of Kemalism was statist, bestowing a significant role to the state in both social and economic policy. For instance, in his manifesto he declared his version of Kemalism as: “[The state should] protect Turkish citizens from birth until death in matters concerning education, health, accidents and provide them with housing and an occupation/job.”<sup>148</sup> Similarly, in the same document, he demarcated the roles for the private and public sector throughout the economy and explained that private entrepreneurship was to be encouraged, but with certain limits considered, such as the public good and respect for human labor and time.<sup>149</sup> Talat Aydemir was greatly influenced by one of the most popular leftist doctrines of the period, which was called the national democratic revolution (milli demokratik devrim), a leftist interpretation of Kemalism that his manifesto reflected.

As much as the military wanted to give the impression that it was a united front ideology, his was not the case. Not only there were different interpretations of Kemalism, but also serious problems with respect to the hierarchical command structure in the military. The 1960 military coup was organized by a group of middle rank soldiers and later owned by two generals. After the military government was established following the 1960 coup, the NUC orchestrated the EMINSU purge and cleared the top cadre of the military from pro-DP ranks. The few generals who remained at their posts deeply resented the purge. Comparatively junior rank officers were restructuring the entire armed forces, and this infuriated senior officers. The NUC generals tried to resolve this problem by ousting the radical 14s faction, which had advocated a minimum four-year period of unfettered military rule.

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<sup>148</sup> Aydemir (1968), 166.

<sup>149</sup> Aydemir (1968), 167.

However, this move did not help with potentially insubordinate units within the military. Colonel Talat Aydemir and a little known organization identified as the Armed Forces Union [Silahlı Kuvvetler Birliği] (AFU), emerged within the military.<sup>150</sup> In April 1961, Air Force Commander İrfan Tansel, Admiral Necdet Uzan, Gendarmerie Commander Abdurrahman Doruk, and Deputy Chief of the General Staff Muhittin Öner joined the AFU with the hopes of taking over the organization and establishing control over junior officers. This move would also give military elites leverage against the NUC. The NUC was aware of the AFU's existence and they were afraid that the organization was in the midst of preparing a counter-coup against them. Therefore, they decided that it was best if they banished Tansel from the military. They had to rule out Tansel's forced retirement as an option because the Chief of General Staff Cevdet Sunay explained to Cemal Gürsel that this would be a mistake because such a move would produce significant reaction from the AFU.<sup>151</sup>

The NUC then decided to assign Tansel to the NATO mission in Washington, DC. Since the situation was extremely delicate, Tansel was to be notified only the night before his departure for his new post. On the morning of June 5, 1961, Tansel was picked up from his home and put on a military airplane heading to the U.S. capital. An hour later as Tansel boarded the plane to Washington, fighter jets took off, caught up with the aircraft, surrounded Tansel's plane, and forced the pilot to return to Ankara and land on MÜRTED military airbase.<sup>152</sup> With this move, the AFU displayed the limits of its power to the NUC and the high command of the military, showing what they could do if they wanted.

The next day following this incident, the AFU sent an ultimatum to the NUC and demanded Tansel's reinstatement to his post and the retirement of Muzaffer Alankuş (Minister of Defense),

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<sup>150</sup> Örtülü (1966), 110-115. Hale (1994), 148-149.

<sup>151</sup> Örtülü (1966), 111. (L): Leader.

<sup>152</sup> Örtülü (1966), 117. Hale (1994), 139-141.

Celal Alkoç (Army Commander), Şefik Ilter (2<sup>nd</sup> Corps Commander), Zeki Özek (Navy Commander Admiral). They also demanded that Cemal Madanoğlu (Land Forces Logistics Commander) and Osman Köksal (Commander of the Presidential Guard Regiment), the only two members who still maintained active duties, to be relieved from their posts in the military and serve in the NUC as civilians. The other ultimatum was that the NUC should not interfere in appointments and promotions within the armed forces. Lastly, there would cease to be any other dismissals from the NUC.<sup>153</sup>

Aydemir and his faction were aware of their power in the AFU, as were the NUC and the Chief of General Staff's office. This is likely why these two institutions demanded an oath of loyalty from the AFU.<sup>154</sup> One would have presumed that the AFU's integration with the command chain in the military would have resolved the issue of insubordination of the colonels. Yet, everything was far from over.

### **From Ideological Clashes Within the Military to The Establishment of a Tutelage Regime: The Military Would Not Let Go of Power**

Despite all the attempted coups and counter-coups in the military, the general elections went forward as announced and took place on October 15, 1961. Four parties entered the election: Adalet Partisi [Justice Party (JP)], Yeni Türkiye Partisi [The New Turkey Party (NTP)], Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi [The Republican Peasants' Nation Party (RPNP)], and Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) [The Republican People's Party].

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<sup>153</sup> Örtülü (1966), 119.

<sup>154</sup> Hale (1994), 141.

After its leadership was executed and its organization dispersed via prosecutions by the military junta, former DP members quickly organized under the JP with the help of grassroots organizations associated with the DP. As expected, the JP program was parallel to the DP party program, and the party unsurprisingly received an impressive 34.8 % of the votes, coming second in the elections. Yeni Türkiye Partisi [The New Turkey Party (NTP)], which was the other party that claimed DP votes, was regarded as the extension of the Freedom Party of 1957, and it included a number of former DP deputies. The NTP “was formed by the intellectuals, elitist and urban wing of the DP” and therefore included high-level bureaucrats, university professors and professionals.<sup>155</sup> The NTP received 13% of the votes and took the fourth in the elections. The RPNP came third with 14% of the votes and was a socially conservative party with Islamist and nationalist tendencies and evolved eventually into today’s Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi [The Nationalist Movement Party (NMP)]<sup>156</sup>. The CHP won the elections by receiving 36% of the votes.

As is apparent from the election tallies, the two parties that claimed DP votes—JP and NTP—received a total of 47% of the votes. Had they manage to enter the elections and centralize political support around one party, they would have won the 1961 elections. It was a boon to the military that the Turkish right was divided among three factions, and that they failed consummate their considerable electoral support into a single political party. Had they been able to muster the necessary elite pact to achieve such a grand bargain, the legitimacy of the May 27 coup would be seriously undermined and military elites could have potentially faced serious

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<sup>155</sup> Geyikdağı (1984), 92.

<sup>156</sup> For detailed information please see Appendix Table 1. Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TÜİK). 2012. *Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri 1923 – 2011* [Turkish Statistics Institution, General Assembly Elections 1923 – 2011]. Ankara, Turkey: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu Matbaası, 25.

charges for the execution of the DP leadership, namely Adnan Menderes, Fuat Köprülü, and Hasan Polatkan, which took place a month before the 1961 general elections.

After the 1960 coup, the military assumed yet another charge in addition to the two conflicting benchmark priorities of protecting Kemalism and maintaining a democratic system. They were now concerned about defending the legacy and legitimacy of the May 27 coup. The NUC dismissed the possibility of a pro-DP coup with the EMINSU purge. However, the urgency of bringing the radical wing, which was in favor of postponing the immediate transition to civilian rule, under control persisted. The expulsion of the Fourteens [14'ler] from the NUC did not adequately address the problem.<sup>157</sup> Senior command was made aware that the radical wing's coup ambitions had found new life, this time in the AFU. The AFU included officers from both senior and junior ranks. Hale notes that members of the senior command joined the group mainly because they wanted to be proximately situated to junior officers should they attempt to carry out another coup, as the case was in the 1960.<sup>158</sup>

Although this claim might have a kernel of truth to it, both the NUC and the chief of the general staff were aware that AFU members were serious and sincere in their coup plotting. The leadership of the AFU believed that a transition to civilian rule had occurred too quickly. Their

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<sup>157</sup> Members of the National Unity Committee, which organized and implemented the 1960 military coup were not in agreement with regard to when to handover the power to civilians. While the Gen. Madanoğlu led group defended an immediate return to civilian rule, 14 members believed prolonging the military rule was a better idea. Disagreement between the members resolved in favor of the group led by Madanoğlu and those 14 members were forced to retire. This incident had revealed that the senior officers did not like the "democratic" structure of the NUC. Instead, they wanted to restore the hierarchical command structure among the senior and lower rank officers, as it is apparent from ranks of soldiers, who were expelled: (1) Colonel Alparslan Türkeş, (2) Lieutenant Colonel Orhan Kabibay, (3) Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kaplan, (4) Senior Major Orhan Erkanlı, (5) Senior Major Şefik Soyuyüce, (6) Senior Major Dündar Taşer, (7) Major Fazıl Akkoyunlu, (8) Major Muzaffer Karan, (9) Senior Lieutenant Commander (Navy) Münir Köseoğlu, (10) Lieutenant Commander (Navy) Rıfat Baykal, (11) Senior Captain İrfan Solmazer, (12) Senior Captain Numan Esin, (13) Senior Captain Muzaffer Özdağ, (14) Captain Ahmet Er.

Çelikoğlu, Adnan and Ergin Konuksever. 2010. *Bir Darbeci Subayın Anıları : 27 Mayıs Öncesi ve Sonrası* [Memoirs of a Coup Officer : May 27 Before and After], İstanbul, Turkey: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 157-158. Hale (1994): 131.

<sup>158</sup> Hale (1994): 140.

work was not done yet, and the decision to go to elections was premature since the military of had not properly instituted the necessary reforms yet. The October 15, 1961 election results only confirmed their doubts. Two parties, the JP and NTP, which claimed the portion of votes that would have normally gone to the DP, earned 47% of the total electorate. Immediate action was now necessary to protect the legacy of the May 27 intervention.

That understanding provoked a group of officers in the AFU into action. With the cooperation of Colonel Talat Aydemir on October 21, seven generals, four admirals, and twenty-seven colonels placed their signatures under what came to be known as the October 21 protocol.<sup>159</sup> The protocol demanded a complete takeover of the parliament. However, a compromise was drawn at the last minute with the assistance of the Chief of General Staff – General Cevdet Sunay. Instead, the military gave the NUC a memorandum, which demanded that (1) İnönü was to form the government as the PM (2) the parliament was to support Cemal Gürsel's election to the presidency (3) no amnesty was to be granted to former DP deputies, who were convicted but not executed, and (4) the EMINSU members and the 14s faction would never be reinstated to their former positions in the military.<sup>160</sup>

Cemal Gürsel convened a congregation of party leaders at Çankaya Presidency Palace. He conveyed to them the items on the AFU memorandum the day before the military had planned to

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<sup>159</sup> Maraşlı, Erol. 2008. *Balans Ayarları: Cumhuriyet Döneminde Askeri Muhtıralar* [Wheel Balancing: The Story of Military Interventions in the Republican Era] Istanbul, Turkey: Metropol Yayınları, 170-171. Signatures included: Lieutenant General Refik Tulga, Major General Fikret Esen, Major General Rafet Ülgenalp, Rear Admiral Bahattin Özülker, Brigadier Faruk Gürler, Commodore Celal Eyicioğlu, Brigadier Yusuf Alpmansu, Brigadier Faruk Güventürk, Commodore Kemal Kayacan, Commodore Ismail Sarıköy, Colonels Doğan Özgöçmen, Suat Aktulga, Namık Kemal Ersun, Burhan Hunoğlu, Halim Kural, Recai Baturalp, Mehmet Bora, Vecihi Akın, Emin Aytekin, Necati Işcan, Turan Çağlar, Fikret Gökner, Rifat Erunlu, Celal Baykam, Cemal Öcal, Bülent Tarkan, Zarf Çetinoğlu, Bedrettin Demirel, Celal Uğan, Vahit Gürkan, Serafettin Olcay, Emin Alpkaya, Ahmet Germeç, Necati Ogan, Sadettin Çakır, Nihat Aslantürk.

<sup>160</sup> Maraşlı (2008): 178-179. 147s incident is the controversial firing of 147 university professors. Before they were expelled from the NUC, the 14s prepared a list of university professors on the grounds that they were not "productive" enough and they should be removed from their posts. In fact, these professors were criticizing the NUC initiatives and pressuring the junta to resume democracy sooner than later. The decision of firing university professors was one the major issues that contributed to the polarization within the NUC. Onuş, Sinan. 2003. *Parola: inkılap* [Watchword: reform] Istanbul, Turkey: Analiz Basım Yayın, 219-221.

hand power to civilian leadership on October 24, 1961. President of the Justice Party, Ragıp Gümüşpala, strongly opposed the third item on the agenda and declared that he would not sign the protocol. İnönü was able to act as broker with the AFU and the JP leadership by convincing them that it would be pragmatic to postpone an amnesty for the time being. This way they could preclude the AFU from staging another coup and the NUC could hand power over to civilian elites. All parties agreed and signed the protocol, which was announced to the public as the October 24 Çankaya Protocol.

The Çankaya Protocol demonstrated to İnönü that the NUC, the Chief of the General Staff, and the parliament that the AFU had to be dissolved and demobilized immediately. Cevdet Sunay delivered this consensus in a meeting of some eighty to ninety commanders on January 19, 1961.<sup>161</sup> Following this meeting, AFU officers also held a meeting on February 9, 1961 and prepared yet another protocol, which was known as the February 9 protocol. Unfortunately for them, members of this group failed to gather necessary support to establish this new protocol. Such a failure also turned Tansel, and therefore the Air Force as a whole, against the group. Tansel, despite his contempt for the JP and ex-DP members, preserved profound respect for İnönü, and he shared Chief of the General Staff Sunay's views on supporting İnönü's coalition government with the JP.<sup>162</sup>

With Tansel changing sides, Aydemir and Seyhan decided to place their forces on alert after the Air Force made a move to arrest some of the officers who had signed the February 9 protocol. Aydemir and his group resisted the arrests on February 22, 1961. With the forces loyal to them, specifically with the support of Major Fethi Gürcan of the Presidential Guard Regiment,

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<sup>161</sup> Hale (1994), 154.

<sup>162</sup> Hale (1994), 156. The group included Lieutenant-General Refik Tulga (the military governor of Istanbul), Brigadier-General Faruk Güventürk (the Istanbul Garrison Commander at the time), Colonel Dündar Seyhan and eight other generals. The group failed to include Air Force Commander İrfan Tansel in the protocol even though it was the AFU, which had him reinstated at his current post.

Aydemir's supporters surrounded the Presidential Palace. At that moment, President Cemal Gürsel, PM İnönü and his cabinet members, leaders of the other political parties, and some commanders were in the palace, discussing the events that led to the current situation in the military. Gürcan phoned Aydemir and informed him that he was detaining the heads-of-state and was seeking advice as to how to proceed. Surprisingly, Aydemir told him to release them. Aydemir has ostensibly wantonly relinquished his lone opportunity to arrest the government.<sup>163</sup>

According to Aydemir, the series of events that led to the February 22, 1961 coup attempt<sup>164</sup>, which was carried out by him and his supporters, was a deliberate conspiracy by the Air Force, the NUC, and the CHP, thereby implicating İnönü as well. Whether or not he was set up, of course, did not change the fact that he had disobeyed his superiors' commands and attempted to arrest leading elites of the government. Nevertheless, he would ultimately avoid serious punishment. İnönü and Gürsel did not know how deep the tentacles of Aydemir's network extended into the government, and therefore they chose to negotiate with him by granting him and his conspirators amnesty under the condition they surrender and accept their retirement from the armed forces.<sup>165</sup>

Aydemir eventually accepted, though he did not give up. He attempted yet another gambit by staging another coup on the night of May 20-21 1963, which never had any real chance of success. Along with Aydemir, 150 rebels were arrested for their illegal attempts to overthrow the

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<sup>163</sup> Örtülü (1966), 188-193, 203.

<sup>164</sup> Aydemir and Seyhan decided to put their forces on alert after the Air Force made a move to arrest some of the officers, who signed the February 9 protocol. The officers that were appointed to the command of Aydemir's arrested supporters were held captive – for a little while at least – and Aydemir and his supporters refused to obey the orders of the Chief of General Staff. The forces loyal to them, specifically Major Fethi Gürcan of the Presidential Guard Regiment, surrounded the Presidential Palace. At that moment, President Cemal Gürsel, PM İnönü and his cabinet members, leaders of the other political parties, and some commanders were in the palace, discussing the events that led to the current situation. Gürcan phoned to Aydemir and let him know that he secured the premises and asked him what to do next. Surprisingly, Aydemir told his comrade in arms to let the heads of state leave. Aydemir lost his one chance to arrest the government there. Örtülü (1966), 188-193, 203.

<sup>165</sup> Hale (1994), 160.



government. Seven of them were sentenced to death. After the judicial process had played out and the alleged conspirators had their day in court, of the seven only Aydemir and Gürcan's sentences were executed.<sup>166</sup> With the AFU's elimination, the group of officers who were inspired by the National Democratic Revolution Movement's ideas gradually faded away in the military.

### **The National Security Council (NSC) And the Armed Forces Trust and Pension Fund (OYAK)**

The 1960 military coup, organized and implemented by a group of middle-rank officers, gave Turkey a new and improved constitution, and one that was unmistakably more democratic. It also revealed the ideological cleavages in the military, which tended to radiate from bottom-up existing ideological cleavages in Turkish society. The military as an institution was as vulnerable to contentious ideological conflicts as any other state institution, and elite fragmentation in the armed forces tended to mimic sociopolitical splits seen in Turkish society at large. Given that the state was being gradually yet genuinely democratized, moreover, the electoral uncertainties associated with competitive and democratic party politics forced elite actors to increasingly respond to the political and social preferences of the Turkish electorate. While the Turkish Armed Forces remained stalwart defenders of the Kemalist state, officers were increasingly torn between pro and anti-coup groups, and they felt conflicted between differing interpretations of Kemalism, as the Türkeş and Aydemir cases made abundantly clear.

Nevertheless, the series of coups, counter-coups, political conspiracies, and elite pacts that occurred between 1957 and 1963 proved to be an invaluable experience for both civilian and military elites. The military elite clearly recognized that keeping junior officers under control and out of politics was a prerequisite to democratize the state. From their standpoint, perhaps the

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<sup>166</sup> Örtülü (1966), 422-23, 434-35.

only way to realize this objective was to find a mechanism that would facilitate senior military elites to intervene in politics on behalf of the Kemalism while at the same time maintaining the appearance that they were not breaching their accompanying commitment to democratize Turkey. Seen this way, they could pursue what had been demonstrated to be two putatively conflicting principles to democracy and secularism, while granting them the institutional prerogative to shape the future direction of the country. The 1960 coup may have produced a more democratic constitution and a more inclusive political system, but it also institutionalized and legitimized the military's paternalistic tutelage of the state.

Among the major institutional changes that the military embarked upon was making the Chief of the General Staff directly responsible to the Prime Minister, rather than the Ministry of Defense.<sup>167</sup> This direct connection still exists today.

Another major institution that the NUC established was the Armed Forces Trust and Pension Fund (OYAK). The fund required a 10% siphoning from the salaries of military and Ministry of Defense personnel. Total revenue was then reinvested to form military industrial enterprises and other for profit companies. OYAK was originally founded to improve the financial conditions of active duty and retired officers. Therefore, the revenues extracted from these investments were used to provide OYAK members with additional pension benefits and to create exclusive access to subsidized loans as well as goods. In 1972 alone, OYAK investments reached an impressive \$300 million value in total assets, which included “a food canning company, the OYAK Insurance Company, the Çukurova cement plant, and a truck and tractor factory,” as well as “substantial interests in the OYAK-Renault car plant, and in the chemical, tire and petroleum

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<sup>167</sup> Hale (1994), 138.

industries, together with hotels and real estate investments.”<sup>168</sup> Today, OYAK investments operate under a conglomerate called the OYAK Group. The Group’s consolidated assets were estimated as 42,255.6 million TL in 2013.<sup>169</sup> Hale notes that the marriage of the military to capitalism through OYAK investments made the institution abandon its former attachment to statism and embrace market capitalism over the two subsequent decades following the establishment of OYAK.<sup>170</sup> When comparing the attitudinal divergence of the military towards leftist movements in the 1960s and in the 1980 military coups, respectively, it seems reasonable to suggest that the military’s neo-liberal corporate expansionism had a large influence in its actions.

The other major institutional reform carried out by the 1961 Constitution was the founding of the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court was furnished with the authority to outlaw political parties. But perhaps the most important institutional change that took place with the 1960 military coup was the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) as an advisory body to civilian governments. In time, particularly following the 1971 intervention and the 1980 military coup, the council’s authority and influence was enhanced to such an unparalleled degree that its exercise of power created two separate enclaves of influence in the Turkish political system.<sup>171</sup> The first enclave entailed the system’s democratic impulses where the procedural and formal aspects of electoral democracy existed. The people, vis-à-vis elections, voted political

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<sup>168</sup> Hale (1994), 174. According to 1961 OYAK law, OYAK’s General Committee includes the Ministers of Defense and Finance, the Chief of the General Staff and the commanders of the four armed forces, presidents of the Prime Ministry’s Supervisory Council (Umumi Murakabe Heyeti), the Banks Association of Turkey, Turkish Chamber of Commerce, Chambers of Commerce and Industry Association, 6 division managers at the Chief of the General Staff, and 3 other members with extensive experience and knowledge in the private sector appointed by the Minister of Defence. Retrieved from

[http://content.oyak.com.tr/oyakdosyalar/media/editor/files/KURUMSAL/OYAK\\_Kanun.pdf](http://content.oyak.com.tr/oyakdosyalar/media/editor/files/KURUMSAL/OYAK_Kanun.pdf) (December 17, 2014).

<sup>169</sup> Data retrieved from <http://www.oyak.com.tr/TR/kurumsal/rakamlarla-oyak/buyuklukler.html> from the table Consolidated Result (December 17, 2014.)

<sup>170</sup> Hale (1994), 175.

<sup>171</sup> Yayla, Atilla. June 21, 2014 “Darbe davaları ve demokrasimizin geleceği” [Military coup trials and the future of our democracy], *Yeni Şafak*. Retrieved from <http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/atillayayla/darbe-davolari-ve-demokrasimizin-gelecegi-54427> (September 9, 2014)

parties to the parliament to form a government. The second enclave, on the other hand, was coopted by the core of military bureaucracy as a result of the NSC's enhanced area of influence. With an abiding belief in the principle of civil inadequacy, this autonomous bureaucratic power, as Atilla Yayla put it, determined the ideological orbit of politics and embedded itself within the state. No civilian government had dared to challenge it until the AK Party came to power in Turkey. Nevertheless, the reserved domain of electoral democracy gradually overcame the paradox of dual legitimacy for the military.

### **Social Movements Diversify as The Fight Between Left and Right Reaches A Climax with The Involvement of the Military**

By the 1960s, leftist movements had come a long way, and they were increasingly mobilizing against the state. This was due to two reasons. First, the political environment in which the 1961 constitution was drafted, permitted the establishment of Marxist parties. Additionally, with the changes made to election law, proportional representation was now the law of the land, and these changes created a window of opportunity for leftist movements to enter the system via political party creation. Second, the Turkish left was able to leverage its mobilizational capacity, specifically among university students, by formulating a discourse in Kemalism. As discussed previously, National Democratic Revolution (NDR) movement was birthed from efforts aimed at merging socialism with Kemalism. Hence, in the 1960s, the Turkish left was essentially split into two camps: adherents that espoused a socialism with little to no reference to Kemalism, and supporters who claimed that Kemalism contained an inherent socialistic ideal that should be

leveraged to advance socialism in Turkey.<sup>172</sup> Both factions included subgroups that disagreed on the issue of how to achieve a socialist revolution, which mainly consisted of legal and extra-legal mechanisms to pursue socialism: Utilizing existing constitutional measures or through armed struggle. The role of the armed forces was also a point of intense debate, since some groups, mostly within the NDR, believed revolution in Turkey could be achieved not by the proletariat, but by the army.<sup>173</sup>

Like all movements for social change, the Turkish left was born out of a specific historical context. The Turkish Communist Party (TKP) was founded in 1921, but it soon went underground after it was banned in 1925.<sup>174</sup> Members of the underground TKP and its sympathizers worked secretly to proselytize the tenets of communism in the context of political authoritarianism. It was not until 1965 that the Turkish left was able to legally form a political party and enter general elections. In this sense, the Turkish Workers Party (TİP) [*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*] was Turkey's first legal Marxist party. The leadership of the TİP, Mehmet Ali Aybar and Behice Boran, who was the first female political party leader in Turkish politics, and Sadun Aren were secretly TKP members and sympathizers. The TİP won 3% of the vote in the 1965 elections and sent 15 representatives to the parliament. The TİP's entrance into the parliament not only legalized the movement but it also made leftist thought more visible and encouraged the factions in the left that defended a potential pathway to revolution through the ballot box against the opposing faction that conceived of revolution as a process involving armed struggle.

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<sup>172</sup> Ulus (2011), 64.

<sup>173</sup> Hotham (1972), 88-89.

<sup>174</sup> "One of the sinister episodes of this half-lit period was the murder of Mustafa Suphi, founder of Turkish Communist Party, together with 14 members of the party executive, in a motor boat in the Black Sea in January 1921. They were on their way to the Soviet Union by sea, after a visit to Turkey. On somebody's orders, a second boat full of armed men went after the first, murdered all 15 Turkish communists, and dumped their bodies in the sea. The only survivor of this massacre is said to have been the Russian wife of Suphi, a handsome Jewess, who was taken as booty by Yahya Kaptan, the ruffian, who, on somebody's orders, did the deed, and who was himself murdered in mysterious circumstances a year later." Hotham (1972), 94.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 by the Soviet Union divided the Turkish left as much as it divided leftist parties in Europe. While members who came from the TKP tradition supported the pro-Soviet line, Mehmet Ali Aybar defended Alexander Dubcek's phrasing of "socialism with a smiling face."<sup>175</sup> The CHP was not particularly enamored with the TİP's existence in the parliament, and the JP's attitude was outright hostile. In February 1968, JP members attacked and attempted lynching TİP deputy Çetin Altan while he was giving a speech from the stump in the parliament. This event, in tandem with growing violence between student organizations, led some groups to question whether it was realistic to keep pursuing revolution through the democratic measures.

The disagreement with regard to methodology was soon exhibited itself on the streets in the form of urban guerrilla groups, mostly led by university students. Among these Marxist-Leninist guerrilla groups, perhaps the most famous, one which inspired future generations of Turkish leftists, was the Turkish People's Liberation Army (THKO) [*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*], founded by Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Hüseyin İnan and three of his friends from Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ). The founding members were all were inspired by Ché Guevara's revolutionary principles.

With the increasing notoriety of the Turkish left, the Turkish right also mounted a response. In 1963, right-wing nationalist and Islamist currents founded the Society for the Struggle against Communism in Izmir. The association quickly spread across the country. Fethullah Gülen, the leader of today's Hizmet Movement, who is the number one suspect of the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016, was among the founders of the Erzincan branch.<sup>176</sup> Another organization, the Union for Struggle (MB) [*Mücadele Birliği*] was founded in 1967 in Konya and advocated anti-

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<sup>175</sup> Hale (1994), 176.

<sup>176</sup> Çetinkaya, Hikmet. 2004. *Fethullah Gülen'in 40 Yıllık Serüveni* [*Fethullah Gülen's 40 Year Adventure*], Istanbul, Turkey: Günizi Yay.,149.

imperialist, anti-communist, anti-Semitic views.<sup>177</sup> The National Turkish Student Union (MTTB) [Millî Türk Talebe Birliği] assumed a nationalist and Islamist vision, and placed itself at the forefront of the fight against communist youth. This association played a key role in bringing Islamists and nationalists together. Some of the most famous AK Party figures started their political activism in the MTTB.<sup>178</sup> Finally, Türkeş's takeover of the Republican Peasant's Nation Party in 1965 gave birth to perhaps the most radical anti-communist, ultra-nationalist group in 1969: the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). MHP's youth organization, "Grey Wolves," received physical and doctrinarian schooling in commando style camps to prepare for the fight against communism in Turkey.<sup>179</sup> In short, student groups from both wings of the political spectrum formed armed organizations. Growing tension between these groups eventually turned into violent conflict on university campuses. When campuses were inevitably closed, the fight moved to the streets. The kidnapping of four U.S. service men stationed in Ankara by Deniz Gezmiş's THKO was the final straw for many Turkish political elites that had tolerated worsening contentious class politics.

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<sup>177</sup> Genç, Süleyman. 1971. *12 Mart'a Nasıl Gelindi? [How did we come to March 12]* Ankara, Turkey: İleri Yayınları, 235-239.

<sup>178</sup> Mehmet Ali Şahin, Abdullah Gül, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Beşir Atalay, Bülent Arınç, Ömer Dinçer, Taner Yıldız, Kadir Topbaş, etc. For more information on famous politicians, who worked as MTBB activists see Akel, Siyami. 2010. *MTTB ve MTTB'liler*. Istanbul, Turkey: Hemenora Yayınları.

<sup>179</sup> Birand, Mehmet Ali, Can Dündar, and Bülent Çaplı. 2008. *12 Mart: İhtilalin Pençesinde Demokrasi [March 12: Democracy in the Claws of [Military] Intervention]*, 153, 158. Hale (1994), 177-178.

## The 12 March 1971 Intervention by The Military

The National Democratic Revolution Movement was gaining momentum in the military yet again. A group of soldiers were under the impression that the May 27, 1960 revolution could not accomplish its stated objectives. Doğan Avcıoğlu's *Devrim [Revolution]* newspaper and his tome *Turkey's Social Order* were very popular among the officer corps, particularly those who maintained lower ranks within military. While Avcıoğlu and his team prepared a draft constitution, those officers planned a takeover of the government, presenting their plans along with the draft to the Commander of the Air Force, Muhsin Batur. Batur later revealed his thoughts as follows:

“When I received that folder, I was very surprised. I mean, I can say that I was shocked. It was not possible for me to agree with any of the things that were outlined [in the folder] with regard to the proposed order of the state. This order completely disregarded the hierarchical structure in the military. I mean a whole different regime. Whatever was described in Doğan Avcıoğlu's book was put in the plan: The Revolution Council and the Revolution Party were going to be founded. The rest of the political parties were going to be banned. The press was going to be taken under control. Everything was going to be nationalized. And they called this Kemalism. Of course, I wrote down my criticism in handwriting and I signed under: “I would not partake in a cause that I don't believe in” and returned the folder to them. On my behalf, the issue was closed there.”<sup>180</sup>

The coup plotters took Batur's criticisms into account and they sent a message to the commander the next day on January 2, 1971 via Air Force staff colonel Kemal Tunusluoğlu:

“Last night, [we] all Air Force officers gathered and examined our leader's comments [in the document] in length. We are not communists. We came from the same spring and we all are Atatürk's officers. If you agree with our form of oath, we hereby declare that we accept your future leadership unconditionally.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Birand et al (2008), 192.

<sup>181</sup> Birand et al (2008), 193.



Batur remained aloof to this message, saying that he could not partake in such a hastily made decision without any commanders supporting it. The officers then took their plans to the Commander of the Army, Faruk Gürler. General Gürler accepted the offer on the condition that the junta grant him the position of the Chief of General Staff after the military coup had succeeded. Believing they had two generals on board, the officers continued with their plan. However, on March 9, 1971, the day the military coup was slated to have taken place, General Gürler revealed that he had changed his mind. Either out of fear, regret, or because he had accepted the offer half-heartedly, Gürler did not go forward with the plan. This was a complete disaster for the national democratic revolution movement. Their dreams of obtaining the military's acquiescence and consent to initiate a coup had ended.

The high command, though, still went ahead with the decision to intervene, but not in the form of a systematic take over of the government. The four generals sat down and drafted a memorandum. In its final form, they demanded a change of government, an amendment to the 1961 constitution, and the implementation of Kemalist reforms. If the government did not meet these demands, the Armed Forces would initiate a coup.<sup>182</sup> PM Demirel, leader of the JP, was left with little choice but to resign. His resignation produced two essential conclusions. First, it made the Chief of General Staff General Memduh Tağmaç become aware of the leftist faction in the military. He was a firm opponent of any intervention, including a memorandum. Given the serious misgivings among members of the military elite, a full overthrow of the government was very likely to produce another vicious cycle of coups and counter-coups, as the case was between 1961-1963. Therefore, Demirel's decision to resign in a way not only preserved the military's

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<sup>182</sup> For the full text of the memorandum in Turkish see, Maraşlı (2008), 230-231. The generals did not specify what they meant by Kemalist reforms in this text.

internal cohesion, but it also kept the parliament open and the democratic system, although seriously crippled, nonetheless functioning.

Secondly, Demirel was aware that without his JP majority, any government would lack parliamentary support for any legislation that went to the floor, let alone constitutional amendments that required a firm two-thirds majority in the lower house. This situation would only create government gridlock, which would eventually be resolved by calling general elections. And that is precisely what happened. Following the Demirel government's resignation, Nihat Erim formed two governments between 1971 and 1972, both of which collapsed within months of their founding because the JP did not support legislative agenda. The following Ferit Melen government also collapsed due to the crisis over presidential elections, as Sunay's seven-year term expired in March 1973. The military's pressure to elect Güler as the new president, and the parliament's resistance to that pressure, created more government gridlock and partisanship that lasted for months, only ending when party leaders agreed on one candidate, Fahri Korutürk.

The Erim government could not succeed in passing legislation that soldiers believed would help Turkey's persistent economic problems. Yet, they were able to fulfill two tasks: The amendment of the 1961 constitution and the initiation of martial law, which went into effect on April 17, 1971 and ended on September 26, 1973. Meanwhile, over 2,000 people, most of whom belonged to leftist and liberal movements, were arrested. Turkey's first openly Marxist party, the Turkish Workers Party (TİP), was closed down by the Constitutional Court. Similarly, Necmettin Erbakan's National Order Party (MNP) [Milli Nizam Partisi] was shuttered for expressing anti-secular and Islamist views. Although both parties were closed, there was a dramatic difference in the way its erstwhile members were treated by the martial law government. While nine leaders

and ten members of the TİP were arrested, tried, and sentenced to prison for periods ranging from six to fifteen years in prison,<sup>183</sup> members and leaders of the MNP were released without charge. Additionally, during this period the 1961 constitution was suspended in an effort to help deal with increasing political violence in the streets. The parliament passed two packages that restricted basic individual rights, the freedom of association and the press, the autonomy of universities, and the independence of state media bodies.<sup>184</sup> The second package, passed on February 8, 1972, established one of the most controversial institutions in contemporary Turkish politics, the State Security Courts, to try individuals for crimes committed against the state.

The practices of the March 12 regime, ended the hopes of leftist movements whom had counted on the military to help foment a socialist revolution. With respect to Islamist movements, the second half of the 1960s was a period of transformation where different Islamic orders (*tarikats*) coalesced to form a larger Islamist party, namely the MNP under the leadership of Erbakan.<sup>185</sup> This was a clear step forward for Islamist movements, which initially preferred the relative anonymity of realizing their demands from within conservative yet secular parties since the beginning of Turkey's multiparty system. Although, the March 12 regime ended the existence of the first openly Islamist party, it also justified to the Islamists, most likely out of necessity, a new strategy which later was employed time and again by movement leaders. This strategy involved a cat-and-mouse game in which they would simply form a new political party under a different name every time the previous iteration of the movement's party was closed. As such, after the MNP was officially banned, Erbakan was able to revive the MNP under a different name, the National Salvation Party (MSP) [*Milli Selamet Partisi*] in 1972. Islamist

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<sup>183</sup> Aren, Sadun. 1993. *TİP Olayı 1961-1971* [The TİP Incident], Istanbul, Turkey: Cem Yayınevi, 163-164.

<sup>184</sup> Hale (1994), 197-199, 201.

<sup>185</sup> Hale, William and Ergun Özbudun. 2010. *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of AKP*. New York, NY: Routledge, 3.

movements, because they capably capitalized on well-established religious networks and organizations that remain outside of state control, had always been resourceful in terms of social capital. Therefore, tapping these resources increasingly became a convenient method for them compared to leftist movements, for instance, which lost considerable support and resources in the form of human capital following each military intervention that targeted them. The left was also subjected to harsher treatment by the military, and were given longer prison sentences relative to members of Islamist and nationalist movements, who were often able to escape lengthy prison terms. Combined with their lack of institutional cohesion and their tactical miscalculation and mistakes, the left was ill-equipped to offer a strategic challenge to the well organized right, much less the hegemony of the military state.

### **Contentious Politics Pre-1980 Military Coup**

The 1970s were no different than the 1960s in terms of political polarization and factional infighting among the state's warring parties. In two general elections in 1973 and 1977, no single party performed well enough to receive a majority in the parliament. The two majority parties, Demirel's JP and Ecevit's CHP, could not agree on a coalition government due to incessant partisanship in 1973 and 1977, lending leverage to Erbakan's minority Islamist party (the MSP) to mount a viable coalition government.

First, the CHP and MSP formed a coalition on January 25, 1974. This coalition government returned Turkey from the brink of collapse over a major dispute concerning the amnestying of political prisoners that the March 12 regime had imprisoned. The MSP wanted to leave leftist political prisoners outside any coverage the amnesty would provide. Ecevit strongly opposed.

The dispute eventually ended with the Constitutional Court's intervention, and the bill passed as it was originally proposed. Meanwhile, the 1973 Cyprus crisis erupted onto the scene, and the Turkish Armed Forces invaded 40% of the island after a large-scale military campaign had succeeded. Bülent Ecevit became a national hero, and the military began to reclaim some semblance of its former reputation as not just a guardian of secular values, but as a guardian of the state itself, in spite of any real threat to the territorial integrity of the Turkish state. The CHP was so popular that Ecevit believed he could win a majority of seats if the parliament went to early elections, but he resigned on September 18, 1974 and the short-lived CHP-MSP coalition government was dissolved. However, the JP, MSP, NMP (MHP), and the Republican Reliance Party decided they would not yield power to the 'left of the center CHP' without a political fight. This decision marked the beginning of the first 'nationalist front' coalition government under the leadership of Demirel on March 28, 1975.

However, because members of Nationalist Front coalition parties emerged out of diverse social and political backgrounds, they could not form a united front. Political gridlock and partisanship followed until the 1977 general elections. Adding insult to political injury, the 1977 election results did not bring the political stability and security that everyone had anticipated. Although the CHP appeared to be the ostensible victor by garnering 41% of the general vote, because of the system of proportional representation, the party could not muster the necessary majority it needed.

In a political environment racked by unremitting party polarization, one in which even the specter of compromise was absent, this signaled another rancorous cycle of coalition governments where minority parties dominated the executive, causing legislative deadlock. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the only thing parties in the parliament agreed on was

that they were in perennial disagreement, and political violence reared its ugly head again on a far more serious scale. People of all backgrounds were being caught in the cycle of violence, including reporters, academics and university students, politicians, civil-servants, police officers, and school teachers were variously targets for political reprisals and in many cases targets for assassination. When the army intervened in 1980, there was a palpable sense of relief for many who feared for their lives and the lives of their children.

Because of the comparatively liberal provisions the 1961 Constitution set up, it is still widely regarded as among the most progressive of all Turkish Constitutions with respect to the centrality of civil rights as a core component of the document's overall effort to democratize the state. As a result, social groups and movements played a large role in tangibly democratizing the state's attitudinal shift, until the 1980 military coup. The leader of the September 12, 1980 military coup, Kenan Evren, referred to this liberal environment as "that Constitution was too loose for us, we started playing inside of it" [*O Anayasa bize bol geldi; içinde oynamaya başladık.*]<sup>186</sup>

### **The 1980 Coup: The Military Reinterprets What Constitutes Kemalism Under Evren's Leadership**

*Fellow Citizens;*

*I would like to express once more that in order to grant the beloved Turkish nation its right to prosperity and happiness; to restore the integrity of the nation and operational power of the principles of Atatürk; to reorder democracy, which cannot control its self on solid grounds; and to rebuild the state's which is now lost authority, the Armed Forces was forced to seize control of the government.*

*~ 1980 Coup D'etat Chairman of the Military Chief of Staff General Kenan Evren's radio address to the nation on September 12, 1980*

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<sup>186</sup> Kuzu, Burhan. 1992. "Yeni Bir Anayasaya Doğru," [Towards a New Constitution] *A.Ü. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 47 (3-4): 219-220.

Under the leadership of the National Security Council (NSC), which included Gen. Kenan Evren, the then Chief of the General Staff, the military staged a coup on September 12, 1980, staying in power for just under three years and three months, until December 6, 1983.<sup>187</sup>

The 1980 coup, in comparison to the 1960 coup and the 1971 intervention, was by far, both in scope and reach, the most successful military coup in modern Turkish history. Most scholarship on the 1980 coup identifies several reasons for this. First, there were no ideological disputes within the top echelon of the military with regard to the purpose of the intervention. All generals and the Chief of the General Staff were in agreement that a complete takeover was necessary in order to end escalating violence between leftist and rightist movements, to restart what was an utterly lackluster and lifeless economy, and readjust a stagnating political system that at that point was paralyzed due to well-established pattern of gridlock and partisanship.

Second, solidarity within the top cadre was bolstered by the fact that middle rank officers did not play an independent role during and after the intervention, and that they were, more or less, under control. Third, the 1980 military coup demonstrated that the Armed Forces had by this point completely abandoned statism and progressive interpretations of Kemalism.

It was clear even before the intervention that precipitated the 1980 coup that the military was on board with a series of stand-by-arrangements with the IMF that Demirel's second National Front government had. A stand-by-arrangement is an economic program offered by the IMF that provides financial aid to countries in the throes of severe economic crisis. In Turkey, Turgut Özal, the economic advisor to the government, briefed the Chief of the General Staff about the third-standby agreement, its purpose, and future effects on the economy on January 8, 1980,

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<sup>187</sup> Other military leaders involved in the coup included Gen. Tahsin Şahinkaya: Commander of the Air Force, Gen. Nurettin Ersin: Commander of the Land Forces, Admiral Nejat Tümer: Commander of the Navy, and Gen. Sedat Celasun: Commander of the Gendarmerie

before it was officially signed on January 24, 1980.<sup>188</sup> The government's and soldiers' efforts focused on ending the disastrous state of the economy by steering it away from the interventionist development policy and opening up the economy to domestic and international market forces.<sup>189</sup> Evren admitted later in his memoirs that the two biggest problems the military would face after the coup was the question of how to more capably address the country's lingering economic problems, and how to prevent a possible negative reaction in the form of an embargo on Turkey, were removed by the January 24 measures months before the 1980 military coup took place.<sup>190</sup>

Although Evren claimed that the 1980 military coup did not specifically target any particular ideological camp, the actions of the military prove otherwise and signaled little political space in the ensuing transition to full military rule for leftist movements, whereas there would be increased political space for Islamist and nationalist movements.

Under the martial law, strikes, public meetings, and demonstrations were banned. Media organizations were subject to heavy censorship, and those which were deemed undesirable by the regime were suspended. Antiregime criticism of any sort was a punishable crime. When Ecevit insisted on openly criticizing the junta government, he was sent to prison for four months in December 1981. In this political environment, leftist movements were viewed as the principal enemy of national security, and they were treated as such. The State Security Courts tried members of leftist movements with respect to Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code, which required prison sentences for the dissemination of communist and socialist activities and

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<sup>188</sup> Yurdakul, Mithat. May 13, 2013. "IMF Destekli 24 Ocak [Kararları] Türkiye'yi 'Dönüştürdü'" [IMF Supported 24 January Decisions Had Transformed Turkey], *Milliyet*. Retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/imf-destekli-24-ocak-turkiye-yi/ekonomi/detay/1707660/default.htm> (December 30, 2014)

<sup>189</sup> Hale (1994), 254.

<sup>190</sup> Oran, Baskın. 1989. *Kenan Evren'in Yazılmamış Anıları* [Kenan Evren's Unpublished Memoirs]. Ankara, Turkey: Bilgi Yayınevi (8<sup>th</sup> ed.), 31.



propaganda. A high percentage of the accused had simply exercised their rights to form an association, to assemble, and express their thoughts in a peaceful manner.<sup>191</sup>

Growing unionism and increasing leftist-unionist activities were also treated as a national security issue. Before the 1980 military coup, initiatives of four leading trade union federations, including the Turkish Trade Unions Confederation (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu–Türk-İş), Revolutionary Workers' Trade Unions Confederation of Turkey (Türkiye Devrimçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu–DİSK), Turkish Just Workers' Unions Confederation of Turkey (Türkiye Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu–Hak-İş), and Turkish Nationalist Workers' Unions Confederation of Turkey (Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu–MİSK) dominated labor activism in Turkey.

Among these four, Hak-İş, founded in 1976, was established by the pioneers of the Islamist movement as an extension of the Islamist National Salvation Party (MSP). The first emblem of the Hak-İş consisted of a factory and mosque silhouette in a crescent, which captured Erbakan's view of industrialization and how a workers' movement should take its place. None of the strikes organized prior to the 1980 military coup was affiliated with the Hak-İş Confederation.<sup>192</sup> The largest trade union of the four, Türk-İş, adopted an 'above party-politics' position since its founding in 1952, and it largely remained under the influence of the government. Not surprisingly, Türk-İş was the only union that escaped closure, and its leaders were not prosecuted by the military state. DİSK was founded in 1967 from within Türk-İş by dissident unionists. The

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<sup>191</sup> Hale (1994), 197. Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code were abrogated in April 1991. Borrowed from fascist Italian penal code, the two articles were originally introduced in 1936. These made it a heavily punishable (death and/or 5-10 years in prison) offence to participate in "any association that were formed with the aim of establishing the hegemony of domination of a social class over the other social classes... or of overthrowing any of the fundamental economic or social orders established within the country or to carry on propaganda to the same effect." They were revised in 1951 and became the version that the State Security Courts employed to specifically penalize members of the leftist movements/organizations of any sort, legal and/or illegal.

<sup>192</sup> Koç, Yıldırım. 1995. *Şeriatçılar, İşçi Hakları ve Hak-İş* [Islamists, Workers Rights and Hak-İş]. Ankara, Turkey: Öteki Yayınevi, 81. See Footnote 219 in the online version, which was retrieved from <http://www.yildirimkoc.com.tr/usrfile/1321049584b.pdf> (January 6, 2015).

founders of DİSK were also among the founders and members of the Turkish Workers Party (TİP). In contrast to Türk-İş's highly moderate behavior, DİSK, by calling for more direct action on the part of Turkish laborers, adopted a radical strategy in which the principle of "class and mass unionism" was embedded.<sup>193</sup> Through organizing numerous strikes, DİSK became very active in labor shortly after it was founded. In 1980, of the 51,000 workers who went on strike, 47,319 were represented by DİSK and the remainder belonged to Türk-İş.<sup>194</sup> MİSK was founded in 1970 as the extension of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in the labor movement. From the day it was established until it was suspended by the 1980 military government, MİSK never went on strike.

In the months that followed the 1980 coup, the military pursued an uncommonly draconian crackdown against labor unions, similar to its militant repression of leftist movements during the 1970s. The military suspended the activities of DİSK, MİSK, and Hak-İş. While Türk-İş escaped full scale closure, it was not allowed to pursue unionist activities. MİSK was permitted to resume its activities in 1984, and Hak-İş began operations again in 1981. DİSK, on the other hand, was subjected to an entirely different level of scrutiny. Including its 264 executives, 1,477 DİSK members were arrested. While the trial dragged on from June 1981 to December 1986, many of the arrested were released during 1984, with a total of 264 unionists sentenced to prison for terms ranging from five to sixteen years.<sup>195</sup> The case against DİSK executives was dropped in 1991, and the union was able to resume activities in 1992.

The military's strategy of maintaining the appearance of impartiality as an honest mediator between the left and right was profoundly consequential for the Turkish right, particularly

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<sup>193</sup> Baydar, Oya. 1998. *Türkiye'de Sendikacılık Hareketi* [Trade Unionism Movement in Turkey] İstanbul, Turkey: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 17.

<sup>194</sup> Ahmad, Feroz. 1993. *The Making of Modern Turkey*. New York, NY: Routledge, 182.

<sup>195</sup> Blind, Peride Kaleağasi. 2007. "A New Actor in Turkish Democratization: Labor Unions." *Turkish Studies* 8(2): 295.

Turkish nationalists. In April 1981, state prosecutors had 392 MHP members, including party leader Alparslan Türkeş brought in front of martial law courts. The protracted trial continued until April 1987, and most of the defendants remained in prison despite the absence of a verdict. In the end, five defendants were sentenced to death for capital crimes, nine received life imprisonment, and 219 were sentenced to prison terms varying from six months to thirty-six years, and 150 were freed due to lack of evidence. Of a total of 392 defendants, 234 were convicted.<sup>196</sup> Members of the nationalist movement were utterly astonished at the punitive nature of the military's actions. For the right, it was difficult to grasp why they had been "put in the same sack" with leftist movements. Given that the right had strategically targeted leftist movements in tandem with the Turkish military, they did not fully appreciate why military had turned on them. One of the pioneers of the movement, Ağâh Oktay Güner, reflected on the irony of this dynamic in his now famous statement where he stated that "our ideology is in power, yet we are inside."<sup>197</sup> The MHP trial became a showcase for the military regime to demonstrate the regime's alleged neutrality, as Evren made numerous references to this case in various speeches he made years after the military coup.

In an effort to legitimize the coup and the full seizure of state power, military commanders stated time and again that the 1980 overthrow was implemented to put an end to intensifying violence, political instability, and the worsening economy. In order to bring an end to political violence, the military arrested an estimated 650,000, executed at least 50 people, and approximately 30,000 people lost their jobs for having been branded as 'undesirables' by the

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<sup>196</sup>Yanardağ, Merdan. 2002. *MHP Değişti mi? Ülkücü Hareketin Analitik Tarihi* [Did MHP Change? Analytical History of the Idealist Movement]. Istanbul, Turkey: Kaya Matbacılık, 274-75.

<sup>197</sup> Türkeş was released in 1985 and assumed the leadership of the nationalist movement as soon as the ban on his right to participate in active politics was lifted by the 1987 referendum.

regime. A total of 14,000 people had their Turkish citizenship revoked, and 30,000 other citizens were forced to flee the country, applying abroad for refugee and asylum status.<sup>198</sup>

In terms of political instability, the generals had already attempted to resolve the increasingly volatile nature of the country's contentious ideological politics by pressuring the Demirel government to pass amendments to the 1961 Constitution, starting as early as 1971 with the March 12 intervention. However, the real change came after the 1980 military coup with the 1982 Constitution, given the political violence of the 1970s.

A number of profound constitutional and parliamentary changes were instituted as a result of the 1980 coup. The Senate was abolished and Turkey returned to a unicameral parliamentary system. In order to prevent the type of government gridlock that had routinely paralyzed parliamentary politics, the military regime introduced a new electoral law in June 1983, which established the controversial 10% electoral threshold required of parties in order to win seats in the parliament. Soldiers blamed political leaders and parties for the anarchic levels of disorder and chaos that had prevailed in the parliament. There were basic structural problems underlying many of these problems, however, and political leaders were exacerbating by refusing to form the necessary parliamentary coalitions that were needed to push through reforms of the government. Unsurprisingly, there was widespread sentiment among the officer corps that political elites were putting ideological fidelity ahead of the country's welfare. Therefore, the military government introduced Article 4 of the 1982 Constitution, which dictated that "the chairmen, general secretaries and other senior office holders in the former political parties could not join or have any kind of relations with future political parties, or run for election (even as an

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<sup>198</sup> Cömert, Hasan. 2012. "Rakamlarla 12 Eylül Darbesi" [12 September Coup by Numbers], *Ntvmsnbc*, Retrieved from <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/24999286> (April 17, 2014)

independent) for the next 10 years.”<sup>199</sup> In addition, a provision of the ‘Political Parties Law,’ which came into effect in April 1983, allowed the junta government, during the interregnum of direct military rule, to veto any individual from forming or taking a role in the establishment of any political party. With this provision, the generals hoped to design a two-party system. One party would represent the newly interpreted Kemalism, which was more or less an amalgamation of market capitalism and nationalism. The other party would come from the ‘moderate’ left to compete against the ‘main’ Kemalist party.

In order to put this plan into action, the military convinced Turgut Sunalp, a retired general, to establish the Nationalist Democracy Party [Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi, MDP] and they also allowed Necdet Calp, a senior civil-servant who had served as private secretary to both Cemal Gürsel and İsmet İnönü, to form the Populist Party [Halkçı Parti, HP]. However, Turgut Özal had already decided to enter elections with his own party. Evren attempted to convince him to join forces with Sunalp, yet Özal rejected this proposal outright and managed to obtain the green light from Evren to establish his Motherland Party [Anavatan Partisi, ANAP].

Demirel also refused to persist under the circumstances the military regime had imposed. He was banned from active politics, though his close political ally Hüsamettin Cindoruk established the True Path Party [Doğru Yol Partisi, DYP]. The CHP members also established a proxy party, the Social Democracy Party [Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi, SODEP] under the leadership of Erdal İnönü, İsmet İnönü’s son. Evren thought it was best to exclude SODEP and DYP from participating in the elections. With respect to excluding Demirel’s proxy party, Evren argued that his goal was to prevent the fragmentation of center-right votes.<sup>200</sup> The existence of SODEP was clearly against such designs because Evren believed the party had been penetrated by ultra-leftist

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<sup>199</sup> Hale (1994), 260.

<sup>200</sup> Hale (1994), 266.

groups.<sup>201</sup> The junta could not have excluded the Motherland Party because Özal was an exceedingly popular elite figure in the eyes of the public. Therefore, such a move would have damaged the legitimacy of the 1980 coup the military had so assiduously attempted to establish. Eventually, the NSC allowed three parties to participate in the 1983 general elections: The Nationalist Democracy Party, Motherland Party, and the Populist Party. Evren expounded on why the NSC resorted to such measures in his memoirs years later as follows:

“... Thus, we were going to have allowed two right-wing parties, and one left-wing party. What we wanted was to enter a three-party election anyways. If we allowed any and all parties to enter the elections, then at the end there was going to be yet another coalition [government] as a result and we were going to face the same critical events that we did after the 1961 elections. This was the reason why we added the provisional Article 4 in the Political Parties law. There are going to be a lot more applications for the establishment of new parties. We are in favor of not allowing any more at this point.”<sup>202</sup>

Overall, the new system the soldiers established mimicked the military structure and reserved domain of junta guardianship over the state that had come to define Turkish politics. Article 118 of the 1982 Constitution enhanced the NSC’s authority and routinized the military intervention in civilian leadership by making the government “obliged to give priority consideration to its decisions.”<sup>203</sup> Article 14 framed the conditions under which personal freedoms and rights are to be exercised, while Article 26 effectively banned the use of Kurdish in the expression and dissemination of thought. Lastly, Article 52 regulated the activities of trade unions, prohibiting them from “pursuing a political cause, engaging in political activity, and receiving support from political parties or giving support to them.”<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Hale (1994), 267.

<sup>202</sup> Evren, Kenan. 1994. *Zorlu Yıllarım v 2* [My Arduous Years v 2]. Istanbul, Turkey: Milliyet Yayın A. Ş., 36.

<sup>203</sup> Hale (1994), 258.

<sup>204</sup> Hale (1994), 259.

As is readily apparent from the laws enacted by the military, in the revised version of Kemalism, leftist interpretations enjoyed little to no political space. Statism was discarded in favor of market capitalism. Individual freedoms and rights were restricted vis-à-vis state authority. Furthermore, an unambiguous message was delivered to the long-repressed Kurdish rights movement that they would be facing an entrenched military elite that was determined to continue its policy of denying them equality within the system. As for right-wing nationalists and Islamist movements, they were considerably less constrained to pursue their ideological agenda within the system, and were allowed more freedom to organize more freely, allowing them comparatively greater breathing space within the “center” of the state relative to leftists and Kurdish movements.

The better treatment afforded to Islamist, leftist, and nationalist groups can be best explained by examining two different yet intertwined processes. The first is related to the military’s experience with OYAK since its founding in 1961. The vast sums of wealth that the military was able to transfer to its members through OYAK companies reinforced the generals’ belief in capitalism, and they gradually steered the country away from a statist view of Kemalism.<sup>205</sup> Second, Turkey’s membership in NATO, its strategic alliance with the U.S. throughout the region, and Turkey’s ambition to become a full partner in the European Union contributed to repurposing Kemalism in the context of contemporary Turkish politics. Given the political exigencies of the 1960s, this interpretation surely tilted more towards the left than it would in subsequent years, as the 1980s, clearly reflected an opposite tendency towards the right. Banu

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<sup>205</sup> With OYAK investments, the military was able to exercise an entrepreneurial mind and develop its business skills, which in the long run prepared the institution for its future investments in the military industry. Today, Turkey’s native military industry is at its current level due to the military’s business venturing that started initially with OYAK and later took a brisk pace out of necessity due to the U.S. embargo following Turkey’s 1974 Cyprus operation. For more information on OYAK investments see <sup>205</sup> Ismet Akca. 2010. *Military-Economic Structure in Turkey: Present Situation, Problems, And Solutions*. TESEV Democratization Program Policy Report Series. Istanbul: TESEV Publications.

Eligür has provided a unique interpretation of the changing tides of contentious Turkish politics through interviews in which important political figures acknowledge the regime's lopsided approach to how they treated the right and the left. In what is perhaps the most striking interview, Devrim Sevimay spoke with the former CIA Middle East policy chair, Graham Fuller, in 2004. In it, Fuller explicitly states that Turkey was among the countries that were included in the Green Belt Project that was aimed at "containing Soviet expansion toward the south during the Cold War," and he continues:

"I guess the idea was ours. But at that time all Muslim states understood that Islam was a very strong wall against communism. ... Because there was a very strong left in Turkey. The same was true for Iran... In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, communism was a very strong movement. And, in Turkey, Islam was not very effective against communism. Islam was weak, but leftism was strong... [At the time] Turks also regarded communism as a bigger threat than Islam[ism]."<sup>206</sup>

As Fuller himself recognized, the instauration of leftist ideologies in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s among the youth, especially in the context of university politics, was more tenacious than the diffusion of pro-capitalist sentiment. This was also due to the fact that leftist ideological currents were on the rise throughout Europe at the time, and that the officer corps that made up the military tended to mirror the deep sociological and ideological divide of the time. In short, enormous sociopolitical cleavages in society necessarily translated to the ideological fragmentation of the elite ruling class as well.

However, in the early 1980s, these divisions never matured enough into organizations that might have precipitated elite defection in the ranks of the officer corps, as the case was in 1961-1963. This was mainly due to the political mechanism that the military institutionalized in 1971 in order to maintain its internal ideological coherence. This mechanism allowed the institution to

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<sup>206</sup> Eligür, Banu. 2010. *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*. Cambridge University Press: NY, Kindle Location 3137-3146. For the interview's original version see Sevimay, Devrim. October 31, 2004. "Tarihi Itiraf" [A Historical Confession], *Vatan*. Retrieved from <http://www.gazetevatan.com/tarihi-itaraf-39231-gundem/> (January 7, 2015).



dismiss members from the military, including academy cadets, who maintained “undesired” ideological affiliations without any due process. Between 1971 and 2011, thousands of officers and academy cadets were either forced to retire or summarily expelled from the military on the such grounds. On March 22, 2011 due to a bill proposed in the parliament by CHP Edirne deputy Rasim Çakır, it became public knowledge that 4,606 retired and dismissed members of the military had filled out applications to request their lost employee benefits because they had been fired from the military without any charge.<sup>207</sup> Retired General Nevzat Bölügiray made a similar point in his memoirs, where stated that in the aftermath of the 1980 coup, military personnel with pro-right tendencies were promoted to positions of influence while others, who were deemed as “undesirable,” particularly in lieu of the new interpretation of Kemalism, were permanently kept from receiving promotions.<sup>208</sup>

### **Mobilization of Islamist Movements Under the New Interpretation of Kemalism**

The increasing mobilization of Islamic movements began to take shape with the state’s active role in promoting what is known today as the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (TIS). The basic tenets of TIS’s ideology includes two emphases: To promote the idea of a great Turkish nation, and to reinforce Turkish society’s historical connection with Sunni Islam. There are different interpretations as to why the 1980 military regime chose to embrace TIS. Harkening back to Fuller’s discussion of the CIA’s role in the region, he argues that the Turkish military tolerated

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<sup>207</sup> Re’sen Emekliler Derneği Değerlendirme Raporu. [Forced Retirees Association Assessment Report] Retrieved from <http://www.re-der.org/?pnum=14&pt=RE-DER+DEĞERLENDİRME+RAPORU> (January 9, 2015). For more information on how this issue became public see Unknown Author. December 12, 2010. “Ordudan Atılanlara İade-i itibar Müjdesi” [Restoration of Honor Good News to the Army Dischargers], *Radikal*, Retrieved from [http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/ordudan\\_atilanlara\\_iade\\_i\\_itibar\\_mujdesi-1032343](http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/ordudan_atilanlara_iade_i_itibar_mujdesi-1032343) (January 4, 2015).

<sup>208</sup> Bölügiray, Nevzat. 1991. *Sokaktaki Askerin Dönüşü: 12 Eylül Yönetimi Dönemi* [Return of the Soldier on Street: The September 12<sup>th</sup> Governance Period]. Istanbul, Turkey: Tekin Yayınevi, 52-53.

the political mobilization of Islamist movements to counterbalance the ‘radical’ left social movements.<sup>209</sup>

The second view falls more into the center-periphery model by suggesting that the civil-military bureaucracy, which did not want to relinquish power since the late Ottoman period, effectively employed the TIS as its master discourse in order to legitimize the 1980 military coup, and it continued to enhance its legitimacy by utilizing a similar discourse in order to tighten their grip on power.

Another view suggests that Turkish generals had tacitly recognized the failure of Kemalism as an ideology, and sought to salvage it by presenting the nation with an ideologically tempered version of it as outlined in TIS.<sup>210</sup> This analysis also argues that military elites originally intended to protect secularism by attempting to render it as “moderate” version of Islam that was merged with Turkish nationalism.

To that end, following the 1980 coup, the state actively endorsed ideas that enhanced Islam’s status within the state, leading to a massive expansion of state-religious services. The capacity of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), for instance, to influence state policy was boosted such that it became the sole institutional authority on all questions relating to the role of religion in society. The DRA was further furnished with the authority to prepare and distribute the Friday sermons from its headquarters in the capital Ankara to all mosques throughout the country.

Over the years, the DRA’s influence has expended even more rapidly. According to data from the 2013 Turkish Statistical Institution [Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TÜİK)], the DRA oversaw

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<sup>209</sup> Eligur (2010) Kindle Location, 3221.

<sup>210</sup> Tapper, Richard. 1994. *Islam in Modern Turkey*. London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 10.

85,412 mosques and 13,021 Koranic schools (1,094,024 students).<sup>211</sup> In the same year, the DRA employed 119,845 employees. Ten years prior, in 2003, the number was just 74,114. The institution received 4.6 billion lira in 2013 from the Turkish state budget, surpassing national expenditure of the Ministries of Interior, Health, Science, Industry and Technology, Environment and Urban Planning, Culture and Tourism, Foreign, Energy and Natural Resources; Development; and European Union ministries.<sup>212</sup>

The assumption that the state's active involvement in producing an Islam that is incapable of morphing into a radicalized form would eventually prevent radical Islamist views from reaching younger and wider populations is, even on its face, highly suspect. The Turkish state has been experimenting with such an idea for over thirty years, and radical and militant versions of Islam are increasingly becoming widespread. To put it in more practical terms, in the two years since the insurgency against Bashar Al-Assad's rule began in Syria in 2012, it is estimated that over 1,000 Turkish men joined the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to help establish a state based on Sharia law.<sup>213</sup> While such evidence is certainly not dispositive of the increasing frequency with which radical Islam has cropped up in Turkish society, Eligür notes that the state's strategy of defining "the true Islam" has never been successful, and such an attempt had the consequence of antagonizing both secular and Islamist elements within society.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, the Turkish state's foreign policy of offering financial and ideological support to radicalized groups in Syria,

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<sup>211</sup> Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TÜİK.) *2013 Kültür İstatistikleri* [Cultural Statistics] Ankara, Turkey: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu Matbaası, 206 - 212.

<sup>212</sup> Baydar, Yavuz. October 20, 2013. "Diyanet Tops the Budget League", *Today's Zaman*. Retrieved from [http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/yavuz-baydar/diyanet-tops-the-budget-league\\_329311.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/yavuz-baydar/diyanet-tops-the-budget-league_329311.html) (December 30, 2014). Also see, "Religious Affairs to Receive Larger Budget Share Than 11 Major Ministries," *Hürriyet Daily News* Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/religious-affairs-to-receive-larger-budget-share-than-11-major-ministries.aspx?pageID=238&nID=33043&NewsCatID=341> (December 30, 2014).

<sup>213</sup> Tezcur, Gunes Murat and Sabri Ciftci. November 11, 2014. "Radical Turks." *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142352/gunes-murat-tezcur-and-sabri-ciftci/radical-turks> (February 13, 2015). Öztürk, Hilal. June 12, 2014. "Türkiye'den IŞİD'e Katılım Yoğun" [Number of ISIS Recruits Coming From Turkey is Significant], *HaberTurk*. Retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/956950-turkiyeden-isisde-katilim-yogun> (February 13, 2015).

<sup>214</sup> Eligür (2010): Kindle Location, 3212 – 3409.

then appearing to draw back such support, undoubtedly helped foment numerous instances of terrorism targeting Turkish state and society.

While leftist movements were time and again discredited by the military, and later by the state following the 1980 military coup, right-wing nationalists and Islamists have for some time now enjoyed a privileged position within the state's body politic. Whether it was their exemption from criminal prosecution, or the military countenancing their capacity to freely organize and mobilize, Islamist movements were afforded a level of autonomy within the so-called periphery that other ideological counterparts have long coveted but rarely realized. Their ability to mobilize, especially within historically economically disenfranchised neighborhoods, and their likewise facility with mobilizing followers helped them establish a mass movement with strong social foundations, and political prerequisite for party creation. Such freedom allowed Islamists to recruit members from impoverished neighborhoods in increasing numbers, strengthening their already formidable social networks, which eventually enabled them to claim more seats in the parliament. From the early 1980s to the mid-1990s, contentious politics saw a steady ramping up of the organizational and mobilizational momentum of Islamist movements. During this phase, while some Islamic orders (tarikats) continued their previous tactic of pursuing their policy objectives within the inherent constraints imposed by the secularizing logic of the state, either in nationalist or other parties on the right, some others, under the leadership of Erbakan for instance, established separate and openly Islamist political parties.

Starting in 1983, until the serial collapse of the secular, center-right party hegemony in 2002, right-wing governments, which included elements of Islamist movements, reigned supreme in Turkey. The added tandem of Islamist entrepreneurs and their interfacing with established political groups with linkages within the state enabled mass mobilization and the spillover of

their movements into areas of society typically foreclosed by non-secular groups. By the mid-1990s, Erbakan, the leader of the Islamist National Outlook Movement [Milli Görüş Hareketi] (NOP), and the Welfare Party [Refah Partisi, RP] ascended to Prime Minister of Turkey in a center-right coalitional government. Most scholars have acknowledged this success as emanating from the periphery, yet they often fail to mention that Erbakan's movement had been active in parliamentary politics and had participated in forming political alliances with other governments since the 1970s.

If we carefully scrutinize the interaction between the military ruling class, political elites, and social forces from a sociological perspective, particularly since the 1960s, it becomes increasingly persuasive and empirically tenable to suggest that state institutions were neither sufficiently impervious to the ideological divisions that made up society, nor were they strategically prepared to address what they perceived be a tactical political problem posed by Islamist mobilization. Indeed, rather than addressing their ability to organize and mobilize their following as a strategic threat, the military relied on a tactical strategy that treated these groups as episodic threats that could be from time to time usefully deployed against the Turkish military's typical ideological opponent—the left.

From this perspective, military intervention can be helpfully portrayed as a manifestation of the military state's interaction with such movements, and how internal state conflict among social forces and the state helped paved the way for subsequent strong state institutions, as opposed to portrayals of a “center” resisting a marginalized “periphery's” take over. ‘State-in-society’ was apparent in the 1960 military coup due to the rising influence of leftist and labor groups, and it legitimized itself by reframing and reclaiming Kemalism along statist lines as response to the mobilizational thrust of the left in the 1970s. Indeed, in the decade that followed the 1960

military coup, the Turkish left was able to extract greater political concessions from the state by pressing its demands in the streets, until the March 12, 1971 intervention that occurred after a failed coup by the left.

### **Islamism and the Just Order Discourse**

As I have depicted them since the beginning of this chapter, sociological portrayals of contentious politics in Turkey allows us to better explain not only why the state countenanced the rise of political Islam, ostensibly its greatest threat, but how it wantonly strengthened the movement's prospects for gaining political traction within the system. Dramatic differences in the intensity of the military state's response to the mobilizational challenge presented by movement's from the right and the left can be seen in how Islamists, for instance, were simultaneously permitted to participate in electoral politics, whereas later they would be proscribed from it. While this was a *tactically* convenient maneuver in the short term in that it temporarily shielded the secular state from an Islamist menace, it was *strategically* disastrous because it cultivated its *long-term* autonomy from the state. Whereas the 'radical' left was permanently banned from electoral politics, the Islamist right existed in a state of suspended equilibrium<sup>215</sup> between full participation or outright prohibition. The right was further never the target of state repression the way the left was, and this had the countervailing effect of strengthening the movement that had the mobilizational and organizational capacity to challenge the military on both *ideological and institutional grounds*, whereas the left never had the social foundation of support in society or the necessary political backing in parliament to accomplish

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<sup>215</sup> Kamrava, Mehran, and Houchang Hassan-Yari. 2004. "Suspended Equilibrium in Iran's Political System." *The Muslim World* 94 (4): 495-524.

either. As is obvious by now to most scholars of comparative politics, but especially to sociological scholars of social movements, the state has limited transformative power, as Migdal and Scott both astutely observed.

The electoral success of Özal's Motherland Party in the 1983 elections is a consummate example of this theorized dynamic. The party was a bastion of ideological diversity, which included liberal conservatives and traditional Islamists and nationalists. Özal himself was a conservative liberal with family ties to one of the most powerful and large Islamic orders in Turkey, the Naksibendi order. Under Motherland's party umbrella, Islamists, nationalists, and conservative liberals were able to exist relatively free of the type of factional conflict that often afflicts such cross-cutting ideological lines. Nevertheless, rivalrous feuds erupted between these when Özal was elected the eighth President of Turkey by the parliament in 1989, following the end of Evren's term in the office. The Islamist and nationalist factions joined forces under an unofficial title of a 'Holy Alliance' [Kutsal ittifak] against the liberal wing. Eventually, the liberal wing's candidate, Mesut Yılmaz, who was tacitly supported by Özal, won the party's presidency at Motherland's convention in June 1991.

While the Holy Alliance suffered a major defeat in this intra-party power struggle, they gained an important victory from outside the parliament. The Welfare Party, representing Islamists and the Nationalist Endeavour Party [Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi, (MÇP)]<sup>216</sup> won 16% of the votes in the 1991 general elections by entering the general elections with a common MP list. On the other hand, this so-called Holy Alliance only lasted until the two parties bypassed the required 10%

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<sup>216</sup> Nationalist Endeavour Party was founded by a group of nationalists under the leadership of Ali Koç on November 30, 1985. The party was known as a proxy party; whose real leader was Alparslan Türkeş. When his ban on participating active politics was lifted along with other banned politicians in 1987, Türkeş assumed the party chairmanship.

threshold to win seats in the parliament. Neither Erbakan nor Türkeş was willing to play second fiddle to one another.

Özal died of a heart attack four years after he was elected president in 1993. His economic policies, although falling short of solving chronic problems of inflation, returned Turkey to a track towards market capitalism. By the time Turkey entered the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, three pressing issues summarized the state of contentious party politics in Turkey: The issue of Kurdish ‘separatism,’ the rights of women to wear Islamic headscarves at work and at school, and the economy. The direction of the economy was no longer an issue of major party conflict since the 1971 military intervention. The 1980 military coup crushed much of the organized left, and with the demise of the Soviet Union, and the ever escalating influence of market globalism discourse in policy making, the left and progressive politics found little in the way of international support. Former Marxists increasingly aligned with social democrat parties, all of which advocated a more or less traditional role for the state on issues of economic development and social welfare.

Meanwhile, Islamists, specifically under the leadership of Erbakan, began to gradually assert the political necessity of Islamism more vocally. The Welfare Party successfully framed the Islamic requirement of maintaining an interest-free economic system in its “Just Order” [Adil Düzen] discourse. The Just Order served as the solution to not only economic but also social problems in Turkey, according to its members and the National Outlook networks. The Just Order discourse essentially emphasized various commitments to social justice, such as solidarity in obtaining a right to a free and quality education and the employment of cultural, social, and economic resources towards a fairer political system.



Moreover, the Just Order discourse emphasized unifying the oppressed and dispossessed in a language similar to Marx but in reference to Muslims. Their slogan was: “Muslims of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!” Erbakan declared the Just Order as the only obstacle preventing full scale market globalism, which he referred to as a “system of slavery” overwhelming millions of people under economic hardship, but especially Muslims. The system, he claimed:

has been oppressing millions of people under economic hardship, poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. This system has been robbing the rights and incomes of these millions of people and transferring them to a small minority group of Imperialists, world Zionists and their collaborators. As a result, the majority gets poorer while a small minority becomes richer and richer. This situation has been causing social unrest in those countries and threatens security and peace in the world.<sup>217</sup>

The Just Order discourse particularly targeted the U.S. and Europe (infidels) as the arbiters of the global capitalist system, whereas it proposed an alternative design by and for Muslims of the world. The international body of the Just Order required the establishment of:

(1) a United Nations which only included countries with Muslim majority populations, (2) a joint Muslim Military Force, much like an Islamic NATO, (3) a common economic zone, much like the EU, which only included Muslim majority countries (4) a common currency, and (5) an organization similar to UNESCO but specifically designed for cultural relations among Muslim countries.<sup>218</sup>

The Just Order discourse possessed significant potential for mobilizing Turkish Muslims in Turkey and in Europe.<sup>219</sup> The RP and National Outlook movement entrepreneurs successfully framed Islamism as a solution to most economic and social problems in Turkey, increasing its electoral viability and leading to successive electoral victories.

In the 1991 general elections, center-right votes were divided into two parties, Demirel’s True Path Party and Mesut Yılmaz’s Motherland Party. Following Özal’s unexpected death, Demirel

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<sup>217</sup> Delibas, Kayhan. 2015. *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*. London: I. B. Tauris, 87.

<sup>218</sup> Delibas (2015): 88.

<sup>219</sup> Eligur (2010): Kindle Location, 5192.

was elected president in 1993. His successor, Tansu Çiller, was the second woman to be elected to a party's chairmanship in Turkey, and she later became the first female prime minister of the country. The two parties received 27 % (DYP) and 24 % (ANAP) of the general vote, respectively. Erdal İnönü's Social Democrat Populist Party received 20%, the coalitional alliance of the nationalists and Islamists, or the RP and MHP, won 16%, and Ecevit's Democratic Left Party [Democratic Sol Parti, DSP] received 8% of the votes. It was the beginning of 1990s when Erbakan's RP announced the Just Order discourse. When the 1995 elections occurred, the RP emerged victorious party with 21% of the votes. The center-right parties, ANAP and DYP, each received 19%, and Alparslan Türkeş's MHP received 8%. A total of the votes received by DSP and Deniz Baykal's CHP was only 18%. An openly Islamist Party emerged as the winner of a general election in the first time in the history of Turkish Republic. They were also very effective in mobilizing the Muslim communities in Europe, especially in Germany, through a network, which centered around mosques. At these places of worship, Islamists urged Turkish Muslims to vote in the general elections in Turkey, informed and influenced them politically. By employing the same discourse, they were able to actively collect large amounts of donations with which they established interest-free Islamic style investment banks, conglomerates, and media companies. The case of Ihlas Holding in 2001 and the probe into Deniz Feneri (Light House) charity case in 2008 revealed clearly how Turkish Islamists funneled significant amount of funds collected for charity in Germany from Muslim communities into various companies and businesses in Turkey.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Öztürk, Özgür. 2015. "The Islamist Big Bourgeoisie in Turkey." Pp. 130-131 in *Neoliberal Landscapes and the Rise of Islamist Capital in Turkey*, edited by Nesecan Balkan, Erol Balkan, Ahmet Öncü. New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

## **February 28, 1997 Intervention and The Birth of the AK Party Movement**

Formulating a discourse that moves and mobilizes wider segments of society was a challenging process for the RP leadership. Yet, the 1995 election results proved that their strategy had been effective. For Islamists, however, the struggle had just begun. The military, which reformed Kemalism in light of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, was utterly astonished by the electoral feat. While the military did not attempt, nor could it, regulate the degree of piety in Turkish society, it was nonetheless determined to temper the state assistance in this arena. For instance, while going to a mosque for Friday prayers was viewed as normal, taking time off from work for praying five times a day was perceived as excessive. The Islamic headscarf also represented a similar understanding of immoderation. This dress code was neither a suitable appearance for modern Turkish women, nor was it authentic.<sup>221</sup> The military tolerated what it referred to as the traditional headscarf, which was loosely tied under the chin. However, it saw the full length headdress as a product of the Wahabi Islamic tradition, which was imposed on Turkish women as a foreign, political uniform. Communism no longer posed a threat, therefore, in the eyes of soldiers, the degree of a person's commitment to Islam had to be regulated. Whereas the previous motivation was to constrain leftist ideology, the military was now motivated to curb the appeal of Islamist movements before they could amount to a significant ideological and institutional threat to secularism regime. This belief led the military elite to impose an 18-point action plan on the RP led coalition government on February 28, 1997. This date is popularly referred to in the history of contentious politics in Turkey as the "soft coup" or the first "post-modern coup" since the military managed to exercise its power on the civilian government without actually assuming power.

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<sup>221</sup> Bölügiray, Nevzat. 2003. *Türban Savaşı* [The Headscarf War]. Istanbul, Tekin Yayınevi: 82-83.

The February 28 intervention was not successful. Of the 18 points, the military mustered the power to enforce just one item on the agenda, albeit a crucial one: the education reform bill. The military elite believed that what made the Turkish electorate more pious than they would ideally like was the rising number of imam-hatip schools. In fact, “the Concept of West Operation” [Batı Harekat Konsepti] report that the military had released in April 1997 indicated that “there was a correlation between the rising number of the electorate graduating from imam-hatip schools and the increase in the RP’s votes.”<sup>222</sup> An education designed around Islamic teaching necessarily produced religious youth, who were more inclined to vote for conservative/Islamist parties. A majority of imam-hatip schools had to be closed and the remaining ones would have to be repurposed to their original intent, which was training imams.

When members of the Islamist movement took to the streets on May 11, 1997 to protest the education reform bill, Vural Savaş, the Chief Public Prosecutor, applied to the Constitutional Court for the closure of the RP on the grounds that the party had become the focal point for religious reactionaries. On January 16, 1998 the RP was closed down by the final verdict of the Constitutional Court. The leader, Erbakan was banned from active politics for five years.

Outlawing the RP, as previous examples show, served as nothing more than a temporary setback for Islamist movements. Retreating from politics, they would simply reemerge later under a new party moniker. As expected, the RP did not lose the electoral dynamism that was best represented by the 21% vote total it had last received. Nor did the closure of the RP fundamentally alter the electoral tastes of the party’s core constituency, they were simply forced to channel them into a newly founded proxy party named the Virtue Party [Fazilet Partisi, FP]. Erbakan coordinated the party without assuming a direct leadership role, given the five year ban

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<sup>222</sup> Eligur (2010): Kindle Location, 7878. See Table 6.2 Comparison of Attitudes of Imam-Hatip High School Students and RP Voters.

he was placed under. The FP received 15.4% of the votes in the 1999 general elections – a 6% decrease compared to the previous election. However, the party came in first in municipal elections, which were held at the same time with the general elections that year.<sup>223</sup> The strong grassroots network of the party proved to be very influential, and despite the counter-mobilization of the Kemalist movement to preclude their electoral viability, they continued to grow their network.

The FP's insistence on pushing for the removal of the ban on public headscarves cost the party its very existence. When FP deputy Merve Kavakçı appeared in the parliament for the swearing-in ceremony following the 1999 elections, the Chief Prosecutor Vural Savaş perceived this move as an open challenge to the secular state, and he filed another petition for the party closure with Constitutional Court. On May 7, 1999 the FP was outlawed by the Court. After this decision, movement leaders fragmented into two camps, one representing the traditionalists, who were in favor of maintaining the National Outlook approach as framed by Erbakan, and the reformist wing under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who believed that the movement needed a novel political platform if they wanted to obtain the necessary approbation of military elites, a prerequisite to their political existence. Hence, the closure of the fourth party of the Islamist movement produced two separate parties: The Justice and Development Party [Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AK Parti], which coalesced most of the reformists, and the Felicity Party [Saadet Partisi], which contained the traditionalist wing.

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<sup>223</sup> The FP won Istanbul and Ankara municipalities, which are deemed the most important to win in local elections in general.

## **The AK Party, Gülen Movement and The Civilian Control of the Military**

By the time Turkey entered the 2002 general elections, Turkish party politics was suffering from endemic ideological fragmentation and parliamentary gridlock yet again. This time, however, the crisis was compounded by the actions of the military. The Constitutional Court had outlawed parties of Islamist and Kurdish movements multiple times over the last decade, and the economy was in dire straits after the 2001 economic crisis. By denying Islamist and Kurdish parties a place in the political system, the state allowed them to preserve and leverage their historical autonomy in both organizing and coalescing their support from the urban poor and business elites, and channeling it into a growing electoral threat that increasingly challenged the electoral dominance of the secularist coalition. Whereas for the Kurds, who had been historically the most oppressed group in Turkey, and with all other legal and institutional channels choked off, for some in the movement the only other viable option was resorting to antiregime violence to press their claims. The Islamists simply did what they always had, which was to regroup outside the institutions of the state by leveraging their superiority in organizing, manpower, and by using the political machinery of well-established patronage networks. Such a strategy allowed them to benefit from state resources while at the same time maintaining their inherent organizational and financial advantages outside the state's reach. Internalization of this strategy by the movement's business elites helped the AK Party operate very carefully with respect to crossing ideological and rhetorical red-lines established by the military. The party spent the first few years in power articulating an emphatically inclusive democratic discourse, which meanwhile helped them avoid the party's closure. Party creation, as discussed in length in this chapter, was among the

strategies that the Islamist, Nationalist Outlook movement members had employed in order to increase their influence within the state.

One other Islamist movement—perhaps now the most infamous given its expulsion from Islamist party politics in Turkey—Fetullah Gülen’s Hizmet movement, chose a different path. The Gülen movement controlled an extensive network of dormitories, private schools, and houses where members of the movement provided accommodation, food, Islamic training, and university preparation courses for the student body. Mostly for financial reasons, most of their student body population had little to no chance of entering or attending university or other state institutions such as the police, security forces or the bureaucracy at large. However, the Hizmet system trained students that had transitioned to influential positions to remember the support that they received from the movement. Imam-hatip graduates were not allowed in the Military Academy, which is generally where the Chief of General Staff is traditionally chosen.<sup>224</sup> Therefore, a strategy of disguising one’s Islamist identity (also known as *taqiyya* in Islamic juridical terms) was necessary for pupils who wanted to attend military academies from Islamist backgrounds. Gülen’s community became highly influential in the police, and to a lesser degree in the judiciary and the military, by employing this strategy. The Turkish public witnessed the capacity of Gülen’s followers in these institutions most glaringly when pro-Gülen prosecutors initiated a massive corruption investigation, which targeted AK Party leaders and some of their family members on December 17, 2013. Putting aside the veracity of claims, the way in which the evidence was collected by the police came as a shock for many astute observers of Turkish politics. It seemingly appeared that pro-Gülen supporters in the police and judiciary had organized their own faction, or what many have popularly called the “deep state,” and illegally

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<sup>224</sup> May 13, 2014. “O Okullara İmam Hatipliler Başvuramayacak” [İmam-Hatip Graduates Are Ineligible for Those Schools (military academy)], *Hürriyet*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/26410138.asp> (March 8, 2015).

taped private and official phone conversations of state leaders, journalists, members of the military, judges, and politicians from opposition parties. In short, people from all backgrounds were monitored, their private conversations recorded and stored to be utilized in the future when and if it became necessary for the movement.

Adding insult to injury as events unfolded, it was eventually revealed that pro-Gülen investigators and members of the police had orchestrated a major effort in the creation of the Ergenekon (2007) and Sledge Hammer (2010) investigations by planting and fabricating evidence in order to imprison high ranking members of the military elite. One victim of the Gülenist network within the police force was a young army helicopter pilot named Mehmet Ali Çelebi. He was arrested at the age of twenty-four on charges of “infiltrating the Turkish branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir in order to control it for ‘Ergenekon’ on September 18, 2008.”<sup>225</sup> The evidence, Çelebi’s cell phone entries, were fabricated and planted by the police in order to frame him. There were provable instances of fabricated evidence produced over illegal wiretappings being used against defendants tried in the Sledgehammer case as well, which eventually led to the acquittal of defendants on March 31, 2015.<sup>226</sup> Again, irrespective of the authenticity of accusations that some members of the armed forces had formed a terrorist organization within the state to topple the democratically elected government, it was plainly obvious that state institutions were now being deployed to bring the military fully under civilian control.

Hence, following the February 28 1997 soft-coup, the Military High Council (MHC) [Yüksek Askeri Şûra or YAŞ] took a more aggressive stance with regard to protecting elites from infiltration by Islamists by invoking a provision that the high command had established in order

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<sup>225</sup> Jenkins, Gareth. 2013. “The Ergenekon verdicts: Chronicle of an injustice foretold.” *Turkey Analyst*, 6. Retrieved from <http://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/50>.

<sup>226</sup> Waldman, Simon A. and Emre Caliskan. 2017. *The 'New Turkey' and its discontents*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.



to eliminate radical left and right elements from the military. The goal here was to prevent a possible ideological split within the armed forces. Most importantly, as revealed by former military intelligence head İsmail Hakkı Pekin, the military could not have officers whose loyalty was divided between a religious leader, namely Gülen, and the armed forces.<sup>227</sup> As a result, between 1996 and 2003, over 900 officers were discharged from the military due to their alleged affiliation with Islamist movements.<sup>228</sup> After explaining that the dismissal of Islamist officers was made in cooperation with the Turkish intelligence agency MIT, Pekin stated that the flow of information between the two agencies had stopped in 2009. He also suggested in the same interview that the MIT director Emre Taner told Pekin to “stop following up with this issue” and that “Fettullah Gülen was a harmless, old man” and that if Pekin wanted he could be introduced to Gülen by the MIT director Taner.<sup>229</sup> Retired General Pekin’s statements are perhaps dispositive of the type of influence that the Gülen movement enjoyed at the highest level of the state. In November 2014, President Erdoğan also referred to the same interview, announcing that the partnership came to an end due to the movement’s involvement in the December Probe:

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<sup>227</sup> İsmail Hakkı Pekin became the intelligence director of the military in 2007 and was arrested in 2011 due to his alleged role in the establishment of anti-government propaganda websites case which was later merged with the Ergenekon case. He was forced to retire in 2012 during a meeting of the Supreme Military Council (YAŞ). In 2013, Pekin was convicted and sentenced to over seven years in prison for his role in the Ergenekon case, in which the defendants were accused of attempting to topple the AK Party government. Pekin revealed in an interview with the Haber Türk daily that General Staff intelligence kept a black list that comprised the names of (allegedly) Gülenist and Islamist officers from other movements in cooperation with the National Intelligence Agency (MIT) and dismissed those members periodically since the February 28, 1997 soft-coup. İlter, Balççek. March 2, 2015. “İSMAİL HAKKI PEKİN: BÜYÜKANİTİ VE BAŞBUĞ’U UYARDIM” [İsmail Hakkı Pekin: I warned Büyükanit and Başbuğ], *Haber Türk*. Retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1048547-ismail-hakki-pekini-buyukaniti-ve-basbugu-uyardim> (March 2, 2015).

<sup>228</sup> Turkey. Parliament. Peace and Democracy Party’s Motion. *How many people were dismissed from the military since the 27 May 1960 military coup for ideological reasons?* Legislation Period/Year: 23/5, No: 10/1022. 2010. *Grand Assembly of Turkish Republic. Web*. Retrieved from [http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/meclis\\_arastirma\\_onergeleri.onerge\\_bilgileri?kanunlar\\_sira\\_no=91269](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/meclis_arastirma_onergeleri.onerge_bilgileri?kanunlar_sira_no=91269) (March 8, 2015)

<sup>229</sup> İlter (March 2, 2015), *Haber Türk*. Retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1048547-ismail-hakki-pekini-buyukaniti-ve-basbugu-uyardim>.

“It is over [referring to the partnership between his party and the Gülen movement]. Up until now, which of their requests did we not fulfill? As long as I occupy this position [at the time he was the Prime Minister], no one should expect a step backwards from us.”<sup>230</sup>

The AK Party owed much to the Gülen movement and its sympathizers in the police and judiciary for providing the elected leadership with the necessary support to overcome many of the traditional obstacles faced by opposition parties in Turkey, such as lack of access to state resources, loss of financial support, and elite allies in the ranks of state important institutions. In a span of five years from the beginning of the Ergenekon trial in 2008 until its conclusion in 2013, a total of 482 officers were prosecuted.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Kozok, Fırat. June 12, 2014. “17 Aralık'ta gelen şok: AKP ile Gülen cemaati arasındaki ipler koptu.” [The shock that came with December 17: AKP broke ties with the Gülen movement], *Cumhuriyet*. Retrieved from [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/82257/17\\_Aralik\\_ta\\_gelen\\_sok.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/82257/17_Aralik_ta_gelen_sok.html) (February 2, 2016).

<sup>231</sup> Şık, Barkın. February 4, 2014. “İşte cezaevindeki TSK,” [The Armed Forces in Prison], *Cumhuriyet*. Retrieved from [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/37985/iste\\_cezaevindeki\\_TSK.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/37985/iste_cezaevindeki_TSK.html) (March 10, 2015).

## Chapter 3

### Establishing Civilian Control over the Turkish Military (2002 – 2016)

#### **The Undervalued Importance of Discourse**

Since the Turkish AK Party came to power in 2002, the institutional sources of state power has gradually but steadily shifted away from the military and in favor of civilian led control of the government, a dramatic dismantling of the military's historical role as the ideological-institutional guardian of the Turkish republic. This resituating of the normative logic that has long characterized the relationship between the military and party-led institutions has been nothing short of revolutionary. Breaking the historical momentum established by the military's strong state authoritarianism has in very real terms amounted to also terminating the most durable hybrid regime in the world since the end of the Cold War. With at least four major coups since 1960, the Turkish military has enjoyed a level of political hegemony rarely enjoyed by any state political institution throughout the developing or authoritarian world. But unlike the experience of many western social movements, the taken-for-granted assumption that social movements at the forefront of mobilizing against authoritarian regimes are always the most committed to democratic politics is contradicted by the Turkish case. Part of this divergence from empirical experience in the west and other other authoritarian contexts, I have argued, arises from statist logic that arbitrarily demarcates boundaries between state and non-state actors.

The previous chapter provided historical context of Turkish civil-military relations from a sociological perspective, and attempted to show how internecine power struggles between social forces within and outside state institutions can help explain the rise of the AKP, the abrupt end of

military-led rule, and the resulting authoritarian outcome of anti-regime social movement mobilization.

This chapter focuses on the AK Party leadership capacity to reframe the military's past interventions as inherently antidemocratic, antiseccular, and illegitimate, eventually marginalizing and circumscribing the military's ability to routinely intervene in civilian politics, and perhaps more importantly, using the military's own ideological commitments to democratization to successfully handicap it.

This reframing, which entailed the ideological and practical deconstruction of the military's historical guardian role, occurred on different levels (intra-elite, public) and platforms (local, global) and it eliminated its institutional role as the unbridled veto player in Turkish politics. Challenging the military in the context of globalization proved to be particularly beneficial since the Turkish military's attitudinal inclination to obstruct and interfere in civilian led rule with relative impunity contradicted in democratic norms of civil-military relations, as explained in chapter 4. By drawing on critical discourse—specifically a sociocognitive approach<sup>232</sup>—this chapter will examine significant AK party discourses as rhetorical attempts at articulating a counter-hegemonic vision of unity by neutralizing the Kemalist underpinnings of the Turkish state and the military.

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<sup>232</sup> Wodak, Ruth and Michael Meyer. 2009. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Sage: Kindle Edition, 315.

## Sociocognitive Discourse Analysis

Sociocognitive approaches such as those developed by Teun A. van Dijk draw attention to the connection between cognition, discourse, and society. This method constitutes a multi-disciplinary approach to how mental, situational, and contextual actions are involved in the production and also comprehension of discourse. In this framework, *situational models for discourse* occupy a privileged position because, as van Dijk notes, “they are the starting point for all semantic processing of text and talk.”<sup>233</sup> Situational models contain *bridging inferences* derived from socially shared generic knowledge about specific historical and empirical events, actors, and objects that remain implicit in a discourse. Situational models for discourse are continually being interpreted, and they “subjectively represent the objects, persons, events and actions a discourse is about.”<sup>234</sup>

Sociocognitive discourse analysis emphasizes that the connection between knowledge and discourse originates from the mental, situational, and contextual ways the articulator and receiver of the discourse respond to each other. Mental models are construed from internal and personal experiences such as desires, demands, hopes, emotions, and people’s own current states. Situational models are subjective representations of a communicative situation, and they identify “local and global coherence” by expressing “temporal or causal relations between events or actions represented in the situation model.”<sup>235</sup> Contextual models are tailored to the specifics of the communicative situation such as the setting, time and place of ongoing text and speech, as

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<sup>233</sup> Van Dijk, Teun A. 2014. *Discourse and Knowledge: A Sociocognitive Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 51.

<sup>234</sup> Van Dijk (2014), 52.

<sup>235</sup> Van Dijk (2014), 50, 52.

well other participatory features of interaction, such as social identities and relationships. A central component of interaction also includes speech acts and conversational activities.<sup>236</sup>

It is important that the situational model is articulated so that it conveys a mental model because only then can the discourse become coherent for the recipient. Therefore, situational models in connection with mental and contextual models serve basic functions for the processing of discourse.

Stated more succinctly, sociocognitive discourse analysis places speech acts and text within the proper sociopolitical context, providing a way to better understand the social and political situation in which, for instance, political rhetoric is delivered at the stump by a member of parliament, or why a newspaper is taking a particular position on a given political issue. My point here is broader than any one position on any one issue – More specifically, I am pointing to the patterns of legibility that make it possible for utterances to be intelligible. They need to call on a shared discursive reservoir for making meaning.

Conventional theories of civil-military control tend to point to the ways in which elites gradually denude the extraordinary level of institutional power enjoyed by the military. However, in Turkey civilian control of the military was not consummated through a grand bargain struck among political elites, or what scholars of comparative politics call pacting, but through intraregime conflict and Islamist capacity to mobilize their followers on the streets during periods of political prohibition, and through the ballot box during periods of political inclusion.<sup>237</sup> In line with sociocognitive analysis and historical institutionalism, I see ideas and ideologies as irrevocably shaping the rule-making norms in state institutions. Thus, civilian control of the military did not occur simply *because* Islamists won elections or *because* they had

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<sup>236</sup> Van Dijk (2014), 55-57.

<sup>237</sup> Interestingly enough, this electoral base was created by the active involvement of the military through inculcation of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis in the K-12 education program.

a large mass following in society, but *because of the ideas and ideologies they espoused to win elections and garner the loyalty of their followers.*

Thus, whereas the predicted organizational strength of the military has been typically theorized in stark institutional terms that scholars of bureaucratic authoritarianism would appreciate, the resulting institutional weakness of the military I submit is as much a result of the ability of Islamists to dismantle the ideological-institutional logic of its guardian role as it was their capacity to challenge the military through the writ of electoral politics. Given that electoral victories and cycles of mobilization by Islamists had never proved to be sufficiently strong or threatening to breakdown this logic, empirical scrutiny falsifies its internal coherence. Islamist discourses, I argue, functioned as situations that foregrounded what Dan Slater called a religious movement's "communal" appeal and its ability to strengthen collective solidarity and stoke sustained antiregime mobilization in authoritarian contexts.<sup>238</sup>

In these episodic discourses, AK party and movement leaders evoked political memories in Turkish history to strengthen communal bonds. By reshaping the meanings of such images and memories, the party was able to frame the military as the primary impediment to economic and political development.

These episodes will be analyzed as *milestone events* in Turkish civil-military relations, and these episodic interactions taken collectively amount to deconstructing the guardian state's interventionist and tutelary logic. In this undertaking, the analytic focus is on mental representations and situations of AKP rhetoric and discourse, which they functionalized against the primacy of the military.

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<sup>238</sup> Slater, Dan. 2011. "Revolutions, Crackdowns, and Quiescence: Communal Elites and Democratic Mobilization in Southeast Asia." *Journal of International Affairs* 65 (1): 15-29.

## 2002 – 2006: AK Party – Articulation of The Self

The 2001 economic crisis was a critical juncture for the Turkish political system in beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a major turning point in modern Turkish history, it was not merely the result of an economic crisis. Nevertheless, the overall impact of the country's economic woes were so deep that it quickly morphed into political crisis –in ways that Gramsci would undoubtedly recognize. A majority of the Turkish public began to question the ideological underpinnings of the existing political system, and the privilege enjoyed by certain political elites and actors within it. As society's demands began to be rechanneled into the political arena, oppositional elements in society increasingly found themselves in a political environment that they stood to profit from. The Turkish political system inexorably arrived at a point where even the semblance of any prior political unity could no longer be articulated. At this point, the AK Party emerged as what one scholar termed the “new agent of integration.”<sup>239</sup> But there was one caveat: The tutelary powers of the military, which took shape in its current form following the 1980 military coup, were still firmly in place. And given the past five years in which previous iterations of the AK party had been closed and its leaders barred from political participation, party elites had to tread lightly to ensure they would survive the next round of elections lest they be expelled from office yet again, but they also had to continue to buffet the foundations upon which military led rule existed.

The process of checking military power occurred in three distinct phases. In the first phase between 2002-2006, the AK Party was able to exploit a domestic economic crisis in Turkey by animating and repurposing the military's own promulgations of its commitment to democracy

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<sup>239</sup> Tugal, Cihan. 2009. *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 24.



against it. Leery of crossing the military's red-line on religious discourse, the Islamist AK Party deployed the military's own democratization rhetoric to avoid expulsion from the system while simultaneously weakening its political inclination to interfere and its institutional ability to do so. For the most part, this phase was a period where the movement redefined its identity in a way that demonstrated it had learned from the mistakes of its predecessors, and established a new identity for its members, to be sure one that was conservative but equally democratic in rhetoric. Moreover, in this first phase, the anti-western discourse that previously occupied an important place in Erbakan's view of Islamism was thoroughly rejected, and most importantly, a new role for the military was carefully adopted by the party members. Still, the party abstained from directly criticizing the military, and it further renounced all suggestions that it was against the founding principles of the regime.

### **Call Me a Conservative Democrat, Not an Islamist**

The AK party spent its first four years in power by attempting to convince Turkish society and major institutional stakeholders that although it had evolved out of the Islamist National Outlook movement, the party was founded on *conservative democratic* principles rather than Islamist ones. Erdoğan promulgated a perspective of this idea at a conference that the party organized in 2004, and his speech was enthusiastically received in spite of ideological affinity. Despite its ambiguity, the AKP's notion of conservative democracy was considered to be a refreshingly novel yet unthreatening take, particularly the sheer precariousness of the party following the last 'soft-coup' in 1997. Combined with the way issues such as Kurdish civil rights had been dealt with, the specter of democratizing the state, irrespective of its political origin or

how it was framed, was received eagerly by a majority of the Turkish electorate who had grown weary from decades of illiberal military politics and worsening economy politics.

At the *International Conservatism and Democracy Symposium*, an event that was organized by the AKP in January 2004, Erdoğan introduced his organization to the world as a center-right party, which was founded on the values of conservatism and economic liberalism. In his speech, he espoused “a new style and understanding of politics,” which, he deemed, as a crucial initiative not only from a national perspective but from an international perspective as well.<sup>240</sup>

*Conservative democracy*, as Erdoğan put it, was responsive to modernity and change. Its underlying philosophy was inspired by the idea of “changing without losing the essence” and it reflected the “indigenous and rooted value system” of the party’s social base.<sup>241</sup>

During the first four years in power, the AK Party successfully enabled its conservative democrat identity without any reference to religion. There was no discussion of Islam in Erdoğan’s speeches as the majority religion of Turkey, or that the “indigenous and rooted value system” of the party’s social foundations rested on Sunni Islam alone. In fact, key AK party leaders time and again categorically rejected Islamism along with all criticisms that the party was simply motivated by conservative doctrine despite its protestations to the contrary.<sup>242</sup>

Many others leveled criticisms that the idea of conservative democracy was too vague of a concept. However, such ambiguity usefully served to shield the party from a more threatening response by the military, and it allowed the party elites to cast a wider electoral net by reaching a demographic that was generally more secular than that of the AKP’s. For the AKP, conservatism

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<sup>240</sup> Unknown author. January 10, 2004. “Erdoğan: Din üzerinden siyasete karşıyız,” [Erdoğan: We oppose politics based on religion]. *Hürriyet*. Retrieved from <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=194995> (May 11, 2015).

<sup>241</sup> Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip. 2004. *International Conservatism and Democracy Symposium Speech*.

<sup>242</sup> Unknown Author. September 5, 2002. “Erdoğan: Bize İslamcı demeyin” [Erdoğan: Don’t call us Islamist], *Radikal*, pg.7.

conveyed two primary points. First, it meant that the party was morally conservative, inspired by its moderate sense of nationalism and Islamic, though not Islamist, principles. Second, it meant that the party had embraced fiscal conservatism in economic policy as a panacea to statist doctrine that had contributed to little in the way of growth.

The party's founding program was heavily influenced by the post-cold war "new world order" discourse, which rested on the premise that market globalism would bring increased economic development, democracy, and a stronger human rights regime backed by the rule of law. The booklet *Fundamental Problems Facing Turkish Economy and Urgent Solution and Proposals*, published by the AKP in 2002, demonstrated the organization's neoliberal orientation, especially with respect to issues such as foreign direct investment, the encouragement of domestic capital, and the speedy privatization of public enterprises.<sup>243</sup>

For a political party whose social origins still remained solidly within Islamist doctrine, the making of a new identity that did not focus on religion was met with, unsurprisingly, little resistance from the military. Yet what was surprising was the lack of resistance from party elites or the party's social base, both of whom might have harbored resentment over the fact that Islam was scarcely being referenced. This framing device presented the party with substantial political leverage not only with its base and a previously untapped electoral demographic, but with the military as well. To further establish their neoliberal bona fides, party elites sought theoretical and scholarly training from the Association for Liberal Thinking, Turkey's first neoliberal think tank, in formulating its *conservative democrat* identity.

### **"Wife, I'm Here, Where Are You?": Body Politics as Social Movement in the AKP**

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<sup>243</sup> AK Parti. 2002. *Türk Ekonomisinde Başlıca Temel Sorunlar ve Acil Çözüm Önerileri* [Fundamental Problems Facing Turkish Economy and Urgent Solution Proposals]. AK Parti Ekonomiden Sorumlu Genel Başkan Yardımcılığı

One of the most long-standing domestic issues in Turkish politics is the role of headscarves in public life. Next to the compulsory religious education in state schools, the headscarf issue is one that has never been fully resolved between Islamists and the secular establishment. What is the proper place for Islamic attire? While the sartorial conformity of men—traditional baggy pants, or the *shalvar*, fez, or turban—have also been a part of this cultural debate, the primary locus of attention has been the codification of rights and prohibitions with respect to the bodies of women.

Needless to say, shifting cultural standards and tastes and the question as to what constitutes proper attire for women in Islam is beyond the scope of this section. What I endeavor to highlight here is how the headscarf debate became a larger political struggle between the military and the AKP Party—in addition to other Islamist movements—and how the framing of this issue, as one that is inextricably intertwined with democratization and civil rights, became a flashpoint and signpost in the struggle to delegitimize the authoritarian logic of the military countenancing a blanket headscarf ban in public. While it might be curious as to why the military was so concerned with controlling women's wardrobe, the semiotics of the headscarf proved too much of an enticing target for the secularist logic of the state. But as we have seen before, the military was caught between its conflicting dual commitments to democracy, on the one hand, and to its Kemalist, secular vision of democracy, on the other.

Often obscured in the tutelary logic of the military's inexorable pursuit of westernization is Atatürk's views on the role of women in society. Atatürk believed in order for a nation to advance politically, economically and culturally, its entire population, men and women, should have equal access to education. However, the way in which the Quran was interpreted and Islam

was practiced in everyday life during the early years of the Republic often did not accord with the immediacy he had hoped his transformative vision could take place.

In one form or another, the overwhelming majority of women covered themselves, and only a small minority of women enjoyed full schooling. Unless they were fortunate enough to come from wealthy families, and for many reasons relating to poverty, rural economics, masculinity, tradition, and some Islamic interpretations of the good life, women were for the most part denied an education. Seemingly, the only way to break this tendency was through the secularization of the public practice of covering. In line with this ambition, Atatürk ensured women possessed equal rights at the workplace, in education and matters concerning inheritance, in front of the law, and in politics. Hence, the Kemalist movement actively supported an understanding of “modernity” that banned the practice of covering: Any woman who could transcend the unwritten laws of masculinity and wanted to obtain an education would be forced by the state to uncover. Women who chose to cover themselves would not be permitted to attend K-12 schools or universities,<sup>244</sup> and in public institutions as employees.

This situation became a focus of major political conflict between the Kemalist and Islamist movements. While Islamist movements considered dismissal of the headscarf ban a fundamental rights issue important to both their constituency and their religious identity, Kemalists claimed the ban was necessary for the survival of the secular state and for women to have the choice to not cover themselves. A significant majority of the secular electorate in Turkey believed that women that chose to freely cover up did so because they had little choice, as pressure from family members, especially male ones, was often too much to ignore for them. Such pressure was often popularly referred to as neighborhood pressure. Meanwhile, there were women who wore the Islamic veil as part of their religious beliefs, and for them to be forced to uncover was

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<sup>244</sup> The ban against headscarves in public universities was established in the early 1980s.

an unbearable insult. Many women wound up abandoning their university education or leaving the country to complete their degrees abroad.

The battle over the female body was for some, a battle over semantics, what constituted the modern and the progressive and what was not, the demarcation between religious symbolism and freedom, and what was considered public space and what was not. The debate seemed to reach a tipping point when the AK Party came to power in 2002. Most of the AK Party leadership, which was male, had wives who wore the headscarf. What would happen if President Gül, then Prime Minister Erdoğan, or parliamentary speaker Bülent Arınç's wife attended an official reception donning a headscarf?

This hypothetical scenario became a reality, when in November 2002 President Ahmet Necdet Sezer was traveling on official state business with the first lady. Then parliamentary speaker Bülent Arınç arrived with his wife, who was wearing a headscarf, to see the President and the first lady away. Sezer was deeply disturbed and stated “there is no place for headscarf in the public or official space.”<sup>245</sup> Following this incident, the military, after a routine brief to the government, announced that “the struggle against reactionism had commenced in 1997 when reactionism entered an open war against the Turkish Republic.”<sup>246</sup>

Within this context, the military made four requests of the government, the last of which underlined the necessity of respecting official state dress codes in public spaces. To make their point even further and to demonstrate the urgency they were affording this, the military, in tandem with President Sezer and Deniz Baykal—the leader of the CHP—boycotted the annual reception marking the founding of the Turkish parliament. Although Bülent Arınç had announced that his wife would not be in attendance, the military sent a message by boycotting

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<sup>245</sup> Demirdöğen, İsmet. April 23, 2003. “Resepsiyonda turban krizi,” [Headscarf crisis in the reception]. *Radikal*, 8.

<sup>246</sup> Gürgen, Murat. December 10, 2002. “Askerin dört hassasiyeti,” [Soldiers' four sensitivities]. *Radikal*, 6. The quote was in reference to the February 28 intervention.

the reception anyways. Deniz Baykal later stated, “this is a warning. If they don’t understand we will be faced with more serious difficulties in the future.”<sup>247</sup>

As the upper echelon of the military elite, the president, and the leader of the opposition protested the attire of the parliamentary speaker’s wife, the AK Party chose to avoid creating a row that might be seen as confrontational. Bülent Arınç stated on live television:

“Here, you see, our commanders are not present. It’s their will. Still, we came together with them in different events earlier today. They are very valuable commanders of our Turkish Armed Forces. I’m extending my respect and hello to them. They attempted creating a tension with regard to the reception but they could not succeed. Turkey will move beyond these [tensions]. In the upcoming April 23 receptions, we will not experience such incidents.”<sup>248</sup>

Later, as he waved at cameras, he questioned the military commanders’ behavior in seeming protest: “Wife, I’m here. Where are you?”

The incident saw the military losing credibility and respect in the eyes of the public, and given the optics of potentially insulting the wife of a political elite, it is not difficult to understand why. Whether or not the military had popular opinion and the public’s backing in enforcing compliance with the headscarf ban was seemingly irrelevant. What was relevant was the ignominious way that the speaker of the parliament’s wife had been banned from attending an important ceremony. A majority of the public perceived the military elites’ behavior as distasteful and disrespectful and unbecoming of the military.

While public sentiment was firmly in the AKP’s favor, the military continued releasing statements from various media outlets that connected the headscarf ban to the struggle against reactionism. The secretary of the National Security Council, Tuncer Kılınç, went one step further

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<sup>247</sup> Unknown author. April 24, 2003. “Baykal: Uyarı ciddi,” [Baykal: The warning is serious]. *Radikal*, 9.

<sup>248</sup> Şimşek, Yurdakul, Ergun Aksoy, Zihni Erdem, Fatma Sibel Yüksek. April 24, 2003. “Türban gündemli bayram,” [Reception with the head scarf agenda]. *Radikal*, 8.

and gave a statement to the media informing the public that while he recognized the delicate nature of the issue, and that he was actively partaking in efforts aimed at resolving the issue once and for all, his personal recommendation as a solution to the issue was not to accept girls in imam-hatip schools.<sup>249</sup> The statement made no logical sense, given that barring women from attending a particular school did nothing in terms of its curative impact on all women.

Following Kılınç's statement, yet another incident occurred that highlighted the military's inability to properly address growing discontent among the AKP and the public at large over their handling of this issue. President Sezer was hosting a reception marking the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the modern Turkish Republic in October 2003. Sezer had demanded that invitations to the annual gala should purposely exclude the wives of public officials who were known to wear a headscarf, including Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. If there were no women at the reception—which is perhaps the most important national holiday in Turkey—the headscarf matter would continue to elicit widespread public condemnation. And contrary to the military's own passive-aggressive proclamations, they would not be solving the headscarf issue but were instead publicly rebuking and shaming top AKP officials, including the prime minister. This time, however, the boycott came from AK Party members. While Erdoğan and his cabinet members attended the event without their wives, the overwhelming majority of the party's 367 deputies boycotted the reception.

When Erdoğan was asked about his opinion, he stated:

“We are governing the state. We don't want these [things] but it happens. When it happens we may be upset, however we continue serving our people [Bağrımıza taş hizmete devam ederiz]. We are after ‘how do we develop this country’ hand in hand both with people who wear headscarves and those who don't wear headscarves.”<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Köylü, Hilal. December 17, 2003. “Türbana ‘askeri çözüm,’” [Military's solution for the headscarf]. *Radikal*, 7.

<sup>250</sup> Unknown author. October 30, 2003. “AKP'den Köşk'e Boykot,” [AKP boycotts the House]. *Radikal*, 6.



More importantly, when reporters asked the prime minister how his wife felt, Erdoğan responded: “put yourself in my wife’s shoes. How would you feel?”<sup>251</sup>

President Sezer defended his actions, claiming that this was not a personal invitation, but the state’s invitation, and as it was codified in the constitution, the state was endowed with certain inalienable responsibilities, one of which included the enforcement of secular laws. Sezer viewed the headscarf issue as Islamists assuming an oppositional posture against the secular nature of the Turkish Republic, and further defended the merits of his actions by referencing similar bans against headscarves that were passed in Germany and France.<sup>252</sup>

The incident not only revealed the inability of the military to recognize the palpable sense of public outrage over the headscarf issue, but it also showed the AKP’s deftness in manipulating missteps by the military to the party’s electoral advantage. While the Kemalist elite unequivocally supported their interpretation of secularism, the AKP embraced a discourse that framed that interpretation of secularism as outdated, undemocratic, and unjust. By deploying the democratization discourse that had been a mainstay of official military policy, the AKP was using the secular state’s own logic, quite paradoxically, against it. Secular nationalists could no longer monopolize the discourses of modernity such as democracy and secularism and with this in mind, AKP elites sought to leverage the headscarf gaffe by mobilizing their following. Erdoğan told the party members before the 2004 municipality elections:

“Do not leave a door bell unrung, employ man-to-man defense. Do not assume people know everything, instead tell them everything one by one. Don’t forget that you are a brand not

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Unknown author. October 30, 2003. “Laiklik karşıtlarına Çankaya’yı kapattı,” [Sezer closed the doors of Çankaya to the opponents of secularism]. *Milliyet*. Retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2003/10/30/siyaset/asiy.html> (May 11, 2015).

only in Turkey, but also in the world. One nail saves one horseshoe, one horseshoe saves one horse, one horse saves one cavalry, and one cavalry wins the war [bir mih bir nal, bir nal bir at, bir at bir süvari kurtarır. Bir süvari de savaş kazanır.]”<sup>253</sup>

### **Coupling “Deep State” With The Military: Şemdinli Incident**

This dissertation has argued that, as Eva Bellin plainly put it, “social forces matter in democratic transition.”<sup>254</sup> But unlike most cases where antiauthoritarian movements are presumed to be ardent champions of democracy, antiregime mobilization in Turkey has increasingly veered towards an authoritarian outcome, contradicting the democratizing assumptions of social movement research. This dissertation is based on both these perspectives, but with three intervening caveats that address how authoritarian durability is weakened in tutelary regimes with ideologically infused guardian institutions, which are considered to be the strongest of all types of nondemocracy. One of the primary theoretical correctives of this dissertation is therefore to not only shed light on how such regimes can be gradually weakened from within through institutional means, but through the spread of counter-ideological discourse as well.

First, is the mobilization of Islamist movements, namely the *AK party-movement*, whose political survival has pivoted on wresting these reserved domains of power away from the military and consolidating civilian control of it. Second, and following their electoral successes, is the ability of AKP elites to formulate an accompanying discourse that politically marginalized the military’s interventionist role in the state. Such a discourse entailed in a palpably real sense

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<sup>253</sup> Unknown author. December 29, 2003. “Erdoğan: Ülke rejiminden memnun,” [Erdoğan: The country is pleased with its regime]. *Radikal*, 5.

<sup>254</sup> Bellin, Eva. 2000. “Contingent Democrats: Industrialists, Labor, and Democratization in Late-Developing Countries.” *World Politics*, 52(2):175.

socially deconstructing the embedded autonomy the military was presumed to enjoy as described from the perspective of statist center-periphery theories. Third, within the context of globalization, international organizations have increasingly played a prominent role in weakening the inclination of tutelary institutions to act in a manner that is antidemocratic. The influence of the European Union has circumscribed the Turkish military's interventionist inclinations and its ability to act with political impunity. But again, democratic reforms to the Turkish state's guardian institutions—most importantly the armed forces—have counterintuitively not redounded to democracy, but to authoritarianism.

To be sure, institutional reform of the military has sprung far more from domestic impetus than it has from international organizations. The supposed existence of a clandestine network of military officers and civilian allies—referred to popularly as the deep state—that has for decades engaged in acts that include the murder and torture of political dissidents and journalists, has only helped rally public opinion in opposition to the military. In confirming the existence of the deep state, Süleyman Demirel, the former Turkish president from 1997 until 2000 stated:

“It is a fundamental principle that there is one state, there cannot be two. However, in our country there are two [states]. There is one deep state and one other state. The state that should be real is the spare one, the one that should be spare is the real one.”<sup>255</sup>

Erdoğan's claim that his government was being destabilized by the deep state was not baseless, according to the Demirel. However, the prime minister, unlike previous instances, chose to surprisingly divulge the existence, illegality and impunity with which the deep state was ostensibly able to act with.

As perhaps the second most important, the public revelation of the existence of the deep state was a clarion call to action for the AK Party elite and other oppositionists in Turkey's political

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<sup>255</sup> Unknown author, NTV. November 16, 2005. “Süleyman Demirel: İki devlet var,” [Süleyman Demirel: There are two states]. *NtvMsbci Website*. Retrieved from <http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/349780.asp> (April 19, 2015).

system. On November 9, 2005 in the southeastern town of Şemdinli, a bookstore purportedly owned by a former PKK (The Kurdistan Workers' Party) member was bombed. One person died and another was wounded as result of the bombing. The target, the proprietor of the Umut [Hope] Bookstore, Seferi Yılmaz, survived the attack. Reportedly, eyewitness accounts claimed someone in a white car drove up near the bookstore, exited the vehicle and threw a grenade into the store. The individual in question then started running back towards the car after lobbing the grenade into the store. However, a crowd that had quickly assembled around the shop in response to the sound of the bombing pursued the suspect and apprehended him just as he reached his car. A struggle ensued between the suspects—the alleged bomber and his accomplice waiting in the car—and members of the crowd, during which one of the occupants of the car opened fire, killing one person in the crowd and wounding another. The police eventually arrested the suspects and took them to the local police station. But by the time the police arrived, the crowd had already apprehended the two suspects and discovered several AK-47 rifles in their car, a Turkish Gendarmerie Intelligence (JITEM)<sup>256</sup> ID-card, and allegedly a list of people who were scheduled to be targeted next. A few days later, the press caught wind of the incident, referring to it as the “second Susurluk.” When it was confirmed by the General Staff that two of the occupants of the car were indeed members of the Turkish military—non-commissioned officers to be specific—what had been a long-standing conspiratorial discourse and view of the military had now been plainly authoritatively given legitimacy by perhaps the most powerful person in all of Turkey.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Hür, A. (2015, May 23). *Devletin karanlık yüzü: JİTEM* [The state's dark face: JİTEM]. Retrieved from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/ayse-hur/devletin-karanlik-yuzu-jitem-1420112/> (April 19, 2015).

<sup>257</sup> Şardan, Tolga and Saliha Çolak. November 11, 2005. “Şemdinli muamması,” [The Şemdinli controversy]. *Milliyet*. Retrieved from [www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/11/11/guncel/agun.html](http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/11/11/guncel/agun.html) on April 26, 2015.

After being caught red-handed, the public's attention turned to the political leadership of the AKP, with many pondering how the party would deal with these stunning revelations. Surprisingly, the party leadership took a strong position, promising to fully prosecute the case based on its merits. Erdoğan, in assessing the incident as one that was not “not local,” went on to describe the event as follows:

“No one should expect double standards from us. They are attempting to bring the state and the nation up against each other. This is their goal. According to the initial findings, it is understood that the incident is not local. It is the continuation of an understanding. This understanding might be based on an ideological organization or it might be the result of a group's emotional reactions. As soon as the findings are clear, we are determined to see through with force what is behind all of this. I have spoken with the Chief of the General Staff as well. We reached consensus. We will see this through to the end... we will prepare the necessary platform for the judiciary to work freely on this.”<sup>258</sup>

Similarly, interior minister Aksu stated that the “investigation into incidents in Hakkari will not be treated as they once were treated.”<sup>259</sup> When Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül was asked about the possibility of the incident being covered up by the system, Gül stressed:

“those who try to cover it up will be forced to go. Turkey had changed incredibly over the past few years. It is no longer in the interest of state to cover things up. It is in the state's interest to make everything transparent.”<sup>260</sup>

In March 2006, the city prosecutor in Van, who would later confess to having ties with the Gülen movement that was accused by the government of having been behind the failed coup attempt in the summer of 2016, released the indictment.<sup>261</sup> The indictment suggested that the two

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<sup>258</sup> Unknown author. November 14, 2005. “Erdoğan: Lokal bir olay değil,” [Erdoğan: It is not a local incident]. *Milliyet*, 17.

<sup>259</sup> Unknown author. Ankara TDN Parliament Bureau. November 24, 2005. “AKP and opposition unite over Şemdinli incident.” *Hürriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=akp-and-opposition-unite-over-semdinli-incident-2005-11-24> on April 26, 2015.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Habertürk (2016, August 2). Ferhat Sarıkaya'dan FETÖ itirafı: Her ay para getirdiler [Ferhat Sarıkaya confesses ties with the Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü (FETÖ): They brought money each month]. Retrieved from

bombing suspects had received their orders from others, and that they had links to the then Land Forces Commander General Yaşar Büyükanıt. In fact, the prosecutor's indictment went so far as to accuse Gen. Büyükanıt of setting up an illegal organization for the purpose of creating turmoil among the Kurdish community in southeast Turkey. The prosecution asked for permission from the General Staff to investigate Land Forces Commander Gen. Büyükanıt's involvement in the incident.

The indictment sent shockwaves throughout the military. The General Chief of Staff had not issued the permission to investigate the incident, and the military subsequently filed an official complaint with the Ministry of Justice, claiming that the prosecutor had committed malpractice and that the indictment contained various misleading statements. Beyond that, the Chief of Staff suggested that the prosecutor that had prepared the indictment was "under the influence of certain groups"<sup>262</sup> and had an underlying motivation to weaken the TAF. In April 2006, roughly a month after the complaint was filed, the Supreme Board of Prosecutors and Judges (HSYK) debarred the prosecutor on the grounds of "breach of authority" and the "inclusion of irrelevant claims in the indictment in violation of the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code."<sup>263</sup> Parliamentary speaker Bülent Arınç of the AK Party commented that he found the penalty too harsh, and stated that anyone, regardless of status, should not be able to escape justice.<sup>264</sup> Despite the removal of

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<http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1275447-ihrac-edilen-savci-ferhat-sarikayadan-feto-itirafi-her-ay-para-getirdiler> , Cumhuriyet (2016, August 1). Savcının Cemaat itirafları [Prosecutor confesses ties with the (Gülen) congregation]. Retrieved from [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/577883/Savcinin\\_Cemaat\\_itiraflari.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/577883/Savcinin_Cemaat_itiraflari.html)

<sup>262</sup> Unknown author. March 22, 2006. "Genelkurmay savcısını şikayet etti," [Chief of General Staff filed a complaint against the prosecutor]. *Radikal*, 7.

<sup>263</sup> Keskin, Adnan. April 21, 2006. "Bomba savcısını uçurdu," [The bomb blew the prosecutor]. *Radikal*, 8.

<sup>264</sup> Unknown author. April 21, 2006. "Arınç: Zil takıp oynamayın," [Arınç: Don't be too happy]. *Hürriyet*, Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/4293848.asp?gid=69> (May 23, 2015).

the prosecutor, the trial continued and on June 19, 2006, the two suspects were each sentenced to thirty-nine years in prison.<sup>265</sup>

The incident was the first time that Gülenist influence of this sort had been thrust into the national spotlight. Although the accusations that the prosecutor was a devotee of the Gülen movement would not be made until the failed 2016 coup attempt, it would provide ammunition to later AK Party claims that groups beyond the military possessed the capacity to systematically weaken his administration. To be sure, during this episode Gülen was politically aligned and supportive of the AK Party, but it would later have a falling out with Erdoğan.

The AKP's describing of the Şemdinli incident was different than the previous discourses on the military, which afforded it a certain degree of institutional independence and protection from such accusations. This new approach, combined with the indictment, which went all the way up the chain of command to the Land Forces Commander, astonished retired and active duty commanders to the degree that one retired commander, lieutenant general Altay Tokat, gave a newspaper interview in which he attempted to justify the events surrounding Şemdinli:

“During my duty I also had bombs thrown at one or two critical places. They [the places] were empty! My goal was to send a message. The prosecutors and judges who were newly appointed from the West don't understand the importance of the issue. We worked very coordinated and well. Then, I saw, after things had gotten a little calmer, they started underestimating us. They go around casually, do this and that. Therefore, in order to set them straight, I had bombs thrown to a couple places near their households. Then they understood that they must be very careful. An example is better than a precept [bir musibet bin nasihatten iyidir]. I trained them that way. You can't just interpret this as 'throwing bombs is illegal.' I might have saved those people's lives. I didn't tell them either. I would laugh at you if you interpret what I did as an assassination attempt on those people's lives.”<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Keskin, Adnan. June 20, 2006. “Şemdinli'de iki askere 39'ar yıl hapis,” [39 years in prison to the two soldiers for the Şemdinli Case]. *Radikal*, 7.

<sup>266</sup> Keskin, Adnan. July 28, 2006. “Emekli paşa bombaların arkasında,” [Retired general is behind the bombings]. *Radikal*, 7.

The stunning sequence of events served to crystallize how the executive was gradually beginning to exert its increased control over the military. From an era in which former military leaders were casually admitting in public to having planted bombs in order to frighten civilian leaders, to one in which members of the military were being sentenced to prison for committing the very same act, the Şemdinli episode signaled the party's growing recognition of its political power.

### **The Deep State vs The National Will, or “Them vs Us”**

One important political discourse that the AK Party was able to time and again deploy with remarkable efficiency was how the military was taking Turkey in an illiberal direction because of the deep state. As scholars have argued, the ideational transformation of a historically strong state institution with a long ideological legacy is a formidable feat for any social movement to accomplish, particularly in the case of guardian regimes.<sup>267</sup> The creation of an ideational discourse that challenges the basis for the military's institutional supremacy received considerable support from the Gülen movement and its vast network of media outlets. This ideational rooting of the military as an increasingly illiberal, undemocratic and corrupt institution therefore found its greatest expression in the discourse of the deep state.

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<sup>267</sup> See for instance, Mohseni, Payam. “Factionalism, Privatization, and the Political Economy of Regime Transformation.” In Brumberg, Daniel, and Farideh Farhi, eds. *Power and Change in Iran: Politics of Contention and Conciliation*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016; Levitsky, Steven R., and Lucan A. Way. 2012. “Beyond Patronage: Violent Struggle, Ruling Party Cohesion, and Authoritarian Durability.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10:4 (December), pp. 869-889; Smith, Benjamin. 2005. “Life of the Party: The Origins of Regime Breakdown and Persistence under Single-Party Rule.” *World Politics* 57:3 (Spring), pp. 421-451.



In this ideational framing, the AK Party repeatedly stressed the military's admitted involvement in the "deep state." Utilizing the Şemdinli case as a framing bridge<sup>268</sup> that linked other instances of military malfeasance to one another, Erdoğan publicly acknowledged the existence of the deep state, made references to it as a mainstay of many of his speeches, and claimed that the deep state's presence was in no small measure due to the weakness of previous civilian governments.<sup>269</sup> He regularly made mention of the necessity of mitigating and eventually completely eliminating the influence of the deep state:

They ask me, is there a deep state? I repeat here: yes, there is. They want me to reveal it. If it was that easy, why did you not reveal it up until now? Under your governments, was there not a deep state? The deep state is not only a problem of Turkey, it is an issue that the entire world deals with. But there is no use in denying this. It exists. How successful are you in dealing with it, you put that forward. If you ask me how I define the deep state, I say that a group of state employees, by forming gang-like organizations and engaging in unlawful activities for purposes they deem sacred, is what the deep state is. ...the deep state is not our state institutions... it is the gang-like formations in these institutions. We stirred up the hornet's nest, it is because of this reason some people are annoyed."<sup>270</sup>

Erdoğan time and again stressed that the deep state consisted of those who were against the will of the nation. The will of the nation, on the other hand, *was the AK Party government*. This was true both in a democratic sense of the party's elected leadership in the executive and parliament, as well as its commitment to democratizing the country, which the military was ostensibly precluding with the deep state.

When the Kemalist Thought Association, a civil society organization composed of nationalists and secularists, organized and scheduled mass protests, Erdoğan branded their actions as being against the will of the nation. During his party's caucus meetings, he drew upon this same ideational discourse, which was primarily aimed at eliminating the military's

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<sup>268</sup> Snow, David A., E. Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford. 1986. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation." *American Sociological Review* 51: 464-481.

<sup>269</sup> Unknown author. January 28, 2007. "Erdoğan: Derin devlet her zaman var," [Erdoğan: The deep state is always there]. *Radikal*, 6.

<sup>270</sup> Nazif, İflazoğlu. February 4, 2007. "Bunlar milliyetçi değil," [These are not nationalists]. *Radikal*, 7.

interventionist role: “No institution can claim the sole responsibility for protecting the Republic,” he said. “You have no right,” he continued, adding that “the public protects the republic, the public is the nation itself and the nation is responsible for getting that job done.”<sup>271</sup>

## **2007 – 2010: AK PARTY – ON THE OFFENSE**

Perhaps the most fitting use of this countervailing discourse occurred when the military made what was to be its final public attempt to reclaim its historical role as secularist guardian of the state during the presidential elections.

The most serious challenge to AKP rule occurred when former Turkish president Ahmet Necdet Sezer’s seven-year term ended on May 16, 2007. The AKP possessed a comfortable majority in the parliament and subsequently nominated Abdullah Gül to become the country’s next president on April 25, 2007. Gül, who was Foreign Minister at the time of his nomination, was one of the most prominent figures of the AK party.

Chief of the General Staff Yasar Büyükanıt issued a statement and expressed a concern over whether the new president would be committed to secularism “not in words but in essence.”<sup>272</sup> Nevertheless, Büyükanıt concluded that the decision belonged solely to the parliament and that he was not authorized to provide further commentary.

On April 27, 2007, the first round of presidential elections was held. Gül received 357 votes. On the night of April 27, a promulgation issued by General Büyükanıt’s<sup>273</sup> appeared on the

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<sup>271</sup> Unknown author. February 28, 2007. “Yine tahriklere başvuracaklar, [They will resort to provocations again]. *Radikal*, 7.

<sup>272</sup> Anadolu Ajansı, AA. (2007, April 12). “Büyükanıt’ın açıklaması tam metin.” [Büyükanıt’s press statement in full text.] Retrieved from <http://vatan.wordpress.com/2007/04/12/buyukanitin-aciklamasi-tam-metin/>

<sup>273</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand’s interview with Büyükanıt. May 8, 2009. “Büyükanıt’tan tarihi itiraflar: 27 Nisan bildirisini ben yazdım,” [Historic confessions from Büyükanıt: I composed the 27 April proclamation]. *Zaman*. Retrieved from

Turkish Armed Forces' official website. The statement questioned both Gül's and the AKP's commitment to secularism. The proclamation came to be popularly known as the e-memorandum.

The e-memorandum cited public instances of growing religious fundamentalism. This included a Koranic reading contest, which was scheduled on the same day as National Sovereignty and Children's Day celebrations, a girls' choir in which young girls were "forced to sing religious refrains in anachronistic outfits at a time when they should have been in bed," and an event organized for the commemoration of the Prophet's birth in which school principals in the district of Altındağ in Ankara were "ordered to participate."<sup>274</sup> The military saw these events as "an open challenge to the state, in the apparel of religion,"<sup>275</sup> and gave a warning to the government:

"It must not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces do take sides in this debate [on secularism] and they are the sure and certain defenders of secularism... [They] will make their position and stance perfectly clear as its need to be. Let nobody have any doubts about that."<sup>276</sup>

The AKP's reaction was different than during the 2002-2006 period, their first four years in office. Whereas before they had refrained from directly accusing specific individuals or groups within the military elite, deputy speaker Cemil Çiçek openly and harshly criticized the military leadership. He informed the public that the General Staff's memorandum was unacceptable and such action was perceived as an attack on the ruling civilian government. He asserted that the proclamation was an attempt to influence Constitutional Court justices during a time when the

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[http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem\\_buyukanittan-tarihi-itiraflar-27-nisan-bildirisini-ben-yazdim\\_845990.html](http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem_buyukanittan-tarihi-itiraflar-27-nisan-bildirisini-ben-yazdim_845990.html) (October 8, 2015).

<sup>274</sup> For the full translation of the "e-memorandum" please refer to Ural, Abdullah. (2012). "Results of the April 27, 2007 Turkish Military's E-Memorandum." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business* v 4 (8): 729-730.

<sup>275</sup> Ural (2012): 730.

<sup>276</sup> Unknown author. April 28, 2007. "Askerden çok sert çıkış: "Uygulamalar cumhuriyet'e özde bağlılıkla çelişiyor, tavrımızı koyarız," [Scolding from the soldiers: The proceedings in practice contradicts the commitment to the republic in essence, we shall react.] *Radikal*. Retrieved from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=219720>

court was deciding on presidential election procedures. Çiçek denied all accusations that the government was turning a blind eye to election procedures, as well as any suggestion they were behaving like Islamic reactionaries. He underscored that independent prosecutors of the Turkish judiciary would act swiftly if the Republic's ideological norms were threatened.<sup>277</sup> In the same speech, Çiçek warned the military that they should cease any action that could “endanger Turkey's economic stability, democracy, its reputation among contemporary nations in the international community, and injure Turkish people's conscience.”<sup>278</sup>

Similarly, Minister of Education, Hasan Çelik stated during a series of TV interviews that these public events, which were listed in the military's e-memorandum as blatant illustrations of religious fundamentalism, were events organized and funded by the Directorate of Religious Affairs annually. His statement continued as follows:

“The Directorate of Religious Affairs organized 12,000 activities as part of Holy Birth Week. Ninety-nine percent of these activities have nothing to do with the Ministry of Education. Holy Birth Week is definitely not an alternative to the April 23<sup>rd</sup> [National Sovereignty and Children's Day celebration]. An investigation is on its way regarding the specific event [cited in the e-memorandum] in Şanlıurfa. They talk about the outfits [Islamic veil that choir girls wore], this was not a masquerade. It was the Holy Birth. If there were concerns, the place to convey them is the National Security Council.”<sup>279</sup>

There are multiple meanings embedded in the statement “this is not a masquerade.” The minister, by underlying the title of the event in his statement, uses what scholars of social movements call “bridge framing,” which is defined as “the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem.”<sup>280</sup> In this case, socially shared generic knowledge about a specific event, which was the commemoration of a specific

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<sup>277</sup> Iflazoğlu, Nazif. April 29, 2007. “Hükümetin cevabının tam metni,” [The government's full response in text]. *Radikal*, 9.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Ankara Bureau. April 29, 2007. “Çelik: Maskeli balo değil, Kutlu Doğum.” [Not a masquerade, it is the Holly Birth]. *Radikal*, 9.

<sup>280</sup> Snow et al. (1986).

person, the Prophet of Islam, was referenced. The shared generic knowledge regarding the commemoration of Mohammed's birth requires a style of dress for females who desire to participate in the Holy Birth events. It is only expected, and is in fact quite normal, for the girls' choir to be covered when commemorating the Holy Prophet's birth. Therefore, from the perspective and context of the event, such dress is not absurd or anachronistic, but is traditional. Therefore, criticism that the outfits "were not a masquerade" is placed in proper situational context by historicizing the framework in which the celebration took place, and by structurally 'bridging,' or linking it, with the military's continued assault on the AKP. The military leadership was framed as being out-of-touch with Turkish society and culture largely because ideational commitments to secularism were outstripping their political commitments to democracy.

Following the military's e-memorandum, the secularist opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) petitioned the Constitutional Court, claiming that the first round of presidential elections should be nullified due to a vague procedural technicality. The Turkish constitution delineates that a quorum of 367 attendees is required for the first round. There were 361 deputies present at the voting. The CHP refused to attend the vote so the requirement was not met. On May 24, 2007, the Constitutional Court decided in favor of the CHP's petition and the vote was nullified. The AK Party candidate Abdullah Gül would not be president of Turkey.

**Erdoğan: "A bullet was fired at democracy."**

Prime Minister Erdoğan denounced the decision by the Constitutional Court as "a bullet fired at democracy."<sup>281</sup> The court's ruling, Erdoğan suggested "is subjecting the will of those who

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<sup>281</sup> Ankara Bureau. May 5, 2007. "Erdoğan: Demokrasiye kurşun sıkıldı." [Erdoğan: A bullet was fired at democracy]. *Radikal*, 9.

represent the majority to the will of the minority.”<sup>282</sup> Facing challenges both from the military and secularist members of the Constitutional Court, Erdoğan called for early elections.

AK Party elites began to increasingly frame their struggle as one that sought to protect the national will against a creeping military rule, or the “us versus them” discourse so assiduously cultivated. Ruhi Açıkgöz, a retired parliament member that served three terms under AKP, recalled those days:

“I was giving a speech at one of my election campaign stops, at a county nearby Aksaray. I could see the Mount Erciyes where I stood. Of course, as you know, the Mount Erciyes is in Kayseri and Abdullah Gül is from Kayseri. I told the electorate everywhere I went, I said: ‘Abdullah Gül grew up in the shadow of Mount Erciyes. He is our neighbor. He is one of you. This friend of yours, who is one of us, one of you – they are not letting him get elected as President. Take this situation into your hands. Who doesn’t want him to become President? The military does not want it, some media, some bureaucrats, some businessmen do not want it. We articulated the situation in such a way that we said take it into your own hands. This country is yours, it’s ours. It does not belong to the military and civil bureaucrats; it belongs to the people. Support us in a way that we can change the constitution. So we explained the situation to the people, as civilian and military elements of the military regime were not allowing Gül to be elected as President.”<sup>283</sup>

The Constitutional Court is a tutelary body in Turkey that enjoys an ideological legacy shaped by secularism that is only rivaled by the Turkish military. While the Constitutional Court preserved the authority to outlaw political parties it deemed had ‘crossed the line,’ what would this say about the regime’s rhetorical commitment to democracy if it decided to do so? How would the majority of Turkish public view the closure of yet another ruling political party that they had demonstrated an electoral preference for?

In this tense political climate, general elections were held in July 2007 and the AK Party won an overwhelming victory by taking 46.7% of the vote. This is juxtaposed to the comparatively meager tally of 34.2% they received in the 2003 elections. In spite of warnings from the military

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Interview with AK Party MP Ruhi Açıkgöz. Ankara, Turkey. April 4, 2015.

and political maneuvering by the Kemalist faction, the now AKP majority parliament elected Abdullah Gül as the eleventh President of Turkey on August 28, 2007. The AKP was also able to pass a major constitutional reform package via popular referendum that contained a provision that now required the President of Turkey to be elected directly by the public.

By any measure, the election was a milestone in AKP persistence and a political bellwether for its electoral prospects, foreshadowing a new era in the history of the modern republic. Perhaps more importantly, it heralded that the executive and the parliamentary branches of government—and not the military— was the basis for the state’s sovereignty.

However, the Kemalist movement still enjoyed control of the judiciary. When the AKP moved to lift the headscarf ban, which had prevented women who wore Islamic headscarves from attending public universities as well as serving in government, Kemalists retaliated by initiating a closure case against the party at the Constitutional Court. Lifting the headscarf ban has been one of the principle objectives of the party and movement’s agenda before it was a party at all.

In February 2008, the AKP, possessing a majority of the seats (343 seats) in the parliament, formed a political coalition with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP, 71 seats) and attempted to pass a series of constitutional amendments aiming to lift the headscarf ban. The opposition CHP and other secularist factions were quick to respond. In March 2008, Abdurrahman Yalcinkaya, the Chief Prosecutor on the Supreme Court, petitioned the Constitutional Court, claiming that the AK Party had become the focal point for anti-secular activities and demanded that the party be closed and senior members be banned from active politics for five years.

The AKP, which had grown out of the National Outlook Movement, had experience with having their party closed. Much like in neighboring Iran where reformist factions and individual

candidates for office are regularly barred from running in national elections, the AKP had grown accustomed to this practice. Under different party names and leadership, the Constitutional Court had subjected the AKP to party closure on many an occasion. They therefore took this instance of intervention by the military seriously, particularly because the Court remained a strong institutional and ideological bulwark against threats to secularism. The 2007 election results misled the AKP in calculating the relative strength of the Kemalist movement. Believing that the secularist coalition was losing ground and political influence, the AK Party assumed that secularist factions throughout the government were no longer in strong enough of a position to mount a challenge to the government. The party also failed to recognize that, although secularists continued to hold influential positions in the judiciary, they would be reticent to upset the electoral legitimacy of the government and thus the party. Consequently, the closure case came as a complete surprise for party members.

On August 1, 2008 the eleven-member panel of the Constitutional Court announced that the party would not be closed, falling just one vote shy of the seven required to ban the party. However, the court also decided that public funding for the party was to be suspended. Many observers stated that the decision was a warning for the AK Party to be more moderate in dealing with sensitive issues such as the headscarf ban. The party took the message seriously and tabled those reforms for the time being.



## **Islamic Movements Mobilize Against the Military Command: Ergenekon and Sledgehammer Cases**

The unnervingly close call of the Constitutional Court's vote on the closure of the AK Party did not go unnoticed by party elites. There was no guarantee that it would not share the same fate as previous iterations of the party. Increasingly agitated, the military was seen by AK Party elites as leaving a subsequent intervention on the table, jeopardizing the party's hold on power. The only political force that could counterbalance a possible coup attempt was the party's capacity to mobilize their followers' potential against the execution of such an attempt. However, in order for that to be accomplished, the discourse on the military's guardian role, which had been the legitimizing bedrock of its interventionist posture, had to be directly confronted as being antithetical to democratic rule.

The electoral success of the AK Party laid in its ability to galvanize popular opinion around the idea that Islamist movements were among the most committed social and political actors organizing against authoritarian rule.<sup>284</sup> The support of the Gülen movement<sup>285</sup> was particularly pivotal in this respect, given their control and influence throughout the media, business, and educational institutions and their capacity to disseminate pro-AKP and antimilitary themes.

While these served as useful outlets to convey Gülen's perspective on Islam, its members and sympathizers in positions of power in the judiciary and the security apparatus launched a wave of

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<sup>284</sup> İflazoğlu, Nazif. August 31, 2007. "Hükümet programı bugün mecliste okundu: Daha fazla özgürlük, daha fazla demokrasi," [Government's program was announced today: More freedom, more democracy]. *Radikal*, 6.

<sup>285</sup> The movement is also known as Hizmet movement and has millions of followers worldwide. The movement's leader Fethullah Gülen lived in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania until 2014. After exposing Erdoğan government's corruption, Gülen was framed as the leader of a terrorist organization. He is wanted by the Turkish law enforcement after a Turkish court issued an arrest warrant twice, the first one on December 19, 2014 and the second on February 24, 2015. Letsch, Constanze. "Turkey issues arrest warrant for Erdoğan rival Fethullah Gülen." *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/19/turkey-fethullah-gulen-arrest-warrant-erdogan-us> (September 11, 2015).

indictments against hundreds of middle and high ranking military officers, which were later proven to be based on fabricated evidence.

The critical situational threshold precipitating the indictments occurred when a Gülenist newsmagazine, *Nokta* [Point], published excerpts from a diary allegedly belonging to Admiral Özden Örnek in March 2007. The diary entry, which contained references to plans and detailed personal notes taken by Admiral Örnek, revealed that the military, under the leadership of Army and Air Force and commanders as well as Örnek, were preparing to topple the AK Party government twice in 2004. This newly discovered evidence by the police had come from influential Gülenist and pro-AKP media, as well as liberal media outlets, and the Ergenekon trial followed soon after the story was picked up by *Zaman* [Time] Newspaper.

Between 2008 – 2011, *Zaman* published a number of articles that blamed the military for conspiring against the elected government. The Sledgehammer indictment was made following the publication of a front-page piece entitled “Sledgehammer Military Action Plan Revealed” on January 21, 2010 in *Zaman*. The story was based on a suitcase full of documents allegedly leaked from the military, showing that the military had planned another coup, under the leadership of the Army commander Çetin Doğan, against the AK Party government during its initial years in power.<sup>286</sup>

Between 2008 and 2011 and following the closure case against the AK Party, six major investigations were launched against the Turkish military and their alleged civilian allies. By February 2014, as a result of those investigations, 143 active-duty (13 of which had a rank of general or admiral) and 119 retired soldiers had been prosecuted and sent to prison.<sup>287</sup> Up until

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<sup>286</sup> Istanbul Bureau. January 20, 2010. “En kanlı darbe planı.” [The bloodiest coup plan]. *Zaman*, 1,16.

<sup>287</sup> During when trials were initiated (1) 28 Şubat Davası – toplam 103 sanık [February 28 Case – total 103 defendants], (2) Poyrazköy Davası – 83 sanık [Joinder under the Poyrazköy Case – total 83 defendants: Amirallere Suikast + ÇYDD-ÇEV + Kafes Eylem Planı Cases], (3) Ergenekon Case – 274 defendants, (4) Balyoz – 365

that date, 220 Turkish citizens with backgrounds in the military were variously in and out of prison.<sup>288</sup> Over the course of five years these indictments caused a major reshuffling of high and middle ranking military officers. They demonstrated that the civilian leadership was increasingly able to leverage considerable bureaucratic resources to help them prosecute active and retired members of the military. Partially because of the media and economic pressure that the Gülen movement was able to apply, on July 29, 2011 Turkey's top military leaders, the Chief of the General Staff Gen. Isik Kosaner, commander of the Army General Erdal Ceylanoglu, commander of the Navy General Esref Ugur Yigit, and commander of the Air Force General Hasan Aksay simultaneously resigned in protest of the government's tireless efforts to pursue and monitor senior military elites. By resigning, the generals sought to register the military's protest of the serial arrests of dozens of commanders and active duty soldiers in what they perceived to be propagandistic and conspiratorial witch-hunts that were aimed solely to weaken the military. The military leadership continued to voice their protest over the arrests while calling for an end to persistent inquiries.

The Erdoğan-Gülen political alliance ended stunningly in 2013 when it emerged that the Gülen movement was ostensibly engaged in creating a so-called "parallel government," independently engaging in illegal activity including manufacturing false indictments based on fabricated evidence, wiretapping of communications, and recording of personal phone conversations of the AK Party government, including Erdoğan himself. Gülen had seemingly been secretly utilizing its network of followers throughout the police, judiciary, and other

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defendants [Sledgehammer] Case, (5) İzmir & İstanbul Askeri Casusluk Davaları – 56 sanık [Izmir & Istanbul Military Espionage Cases – 56 defendants], (6) Kozmik Oda Soruşturması – 0 sanık [Cosmic Room Investigation – 0 defendants].

<sup>288</sup> Şık, Barkın. 2014, February 5. İşte cezaevindeki TSK [The Turkish Armed Forces in prison]. *Cumhuriyet*. Retrieved February 13, 2015, from [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/37985/iste\\_cezaevindeki\\_TSK.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/37985/iste_cezaevindeki_TSK.html)

government institutions to simultaneously gather evidence on AKP party elites during the December 2013 corruption scandal.

Yet with the exception of four of his cabinet ministers, Erdoğan's government survived Gülen's apparent publication of the AK Party political corruption. Erdoğan and his party were able to frame the scandal as one that was planned, orchestrated, and manufactured by members of the Gülen. Erdoğan had labeled the incident as an attempted coup based on the production of invented evidence, which aimed to topple the government and destabilize the country. He accused prosecutors as serving as tools of the Gülen movement, which he described as a "parallel organization, striving to be a state within the state."<sup>289</sup> The deep state discourse was again be used to legitimize attacks against his political opponents, except in this case it was Gülen, not the military.

The Gülen Movement and the National Outlook Movement were the most visible manifestations of political Islam in Turkey. Both groups had a substantial political following backed by well-funded economic elites. Ironically, the elevation of Islamists to the oppositional forefront of Turkish contentious politics was directly facilitated by the military's own decisions and its deal making with Islamist groups following the 1980 military coup.

Ideologically, the two differed on key issues such as the headscarf matter, relations with the West and Israel, and how to address issues related to Kurdish civil rights. While the Gülen movement advocated a more progressive vision of political Islam, Erdoğan represented a distinctly more conservative Islam. Significantly, perhaps one of the greatest practical differences between the two was how they mobilized their followers. While the Gülen movement saw effective mobilization as pivoting from the infiltration of the military and other state

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<sup>289</sup> Erdoğan: İnimize gireceğiz [Erdoğan: We will go into their caves]. (2013, December 21). Retrieved July 30, 2015, from NTV, [http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-inimize-girecegiz,O880LJAKuEmNbkgmeGonsw?\\_ref=infinite](http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-inimize-girecegiz,O880LJAKuEmNbkgmeGonsw?_ref=infinite)

institutions, the National Outlook and other political antecedents of the AKP preferred to mobilize their movement by establishing political parties in order to competitively contest elections and gain a foothold in the political system that was commensurate with their presence in society and culture. While the Gülen movement never transitioned to becoming a political party, after the military's anti-Islamist "postmodern coup" in 1997, they increasingly chose to form a coalition with the most recent party-led manifestations of the National Outlook. When a reformist wing separated from National Outlook under the leadership of Erdoğan, the Gülen movement contributed enormously to the human and financial capital of the founding of the AK Party, even reserving seats for its members in the party.<sup>290</sup>

From the early 2000s until the end of Erdoğan-Gülen union in 2013, the two movements appeared to be ideologically aligned in their collective opposition to military rule. Following the corruption scandal that had personally humiliated the AK Party, Erdoğan claimed at the onset of the Ergenekon and Balyoz indictments that he had been deceived by Gülen and their forging of documents and manufacturing of evidence that the "parallel government" had been responsible for.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Tugal, Cihan. 2016. "Turkey's Disaster." *Jacobin*. Retrieved from <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/07/turkey-erdogan-coup-gulen-kemalist-kurdish-war/> (August 2, 2016).

<sup>291</sup> Ulusal Kanal. (2015, March 19). "'Sahte belgelerle kandırıldık.'" Retrieved from <http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/gundem/sahte-belgelerle-kandirildik-h53633.html>

## **July 15, 2016 Coup Attempt: Counter-Mobilization of Social Movements Leads to Restructuring of the Turkish Military and its Education System.**

Perhaps the most obvious illustration of the type of influence that social movements could exercise on state institutions was when Gülen movement sympathizers planned an unsuccessful military coup to overthrow the AK Party government.

On the night of July 15, 2016, the two bridges that connect the European side of Istanbul to Asia were completely closed to all passage by officers attempting a military putsch of the government. Fighter jets were seen streaking across the Istanbul skyline, performing low-altitude sorties in an effort to harass and intimidate AK Party sympathizers. Around midnight, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım appeared on live television and informed the public that what was ongoing was a “rebellion attempt.”<sup>292</sup> In the hours following this statement, coup plotters invaded Turkish state television (TRT) and forced an anchorwoman to read a statement. Meanwhile, the Turkish Armed Forces website posted a statement signed by the TAF Council of Peace at Home. Anchorwoman Tijen Karaş read the following statement on live air:

Dear citizens of the Republic of Turkey,

Airing of this text in all media channels in Turkey is a wish and order of the Turkish Armed Forces.

The constitutional and other violations of law, which have been performed in a systematically, have become a major threat to the existence of the state and its vital institutions. All institutions of the state, including the Turkish Armed Forces, have been influenced by ideological motives and therefore made unable to perform their tasks. Fundamental rights and freedoms, and the separation of powers based on secular and democratic rule of law, has been virtually eliminated and damaged by the President and government officials, who dwell in heedlessness, misguidance, and even treason. Our state has lost the reputation it deserves in the international arena and was turned into a country that is ruled by autocracy based on fear where basic universal human rights are ignored.

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<sup>292</sup> CNN TÜRK. (2016, July 16). *Başbakan Binali Yıldırım'dan açıklama: Kalkışma girişimi* [Press release from PM Binali Yıldırım: Rebellion attempt] Retrieved from <http://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/basbakan-binali-yildirimdan-aciklama-kalkisma-girisimi>

Terrorism, which climbed due to the erroneous decisions has claimed many lives of innocent citizens as well as our national security personnel, who fight against terrorists. Corruption and theft has reached serious proportions in the bureaucracy and the legal system.

Under these circumstances, the Turkish Armed Forces, as the protector of our Republic, which was founded under the supreme leadership of Atatürk by the extraordinary sacrifices of our nation, based on the “Peace at Home, Peace Abroad” principle, in order to maintain the indivisible unity of the country and the state’s survival; to eliminate the dangers in the face of our republic’s achievements; to eliminate de facto obstacles to the rule of law; to prevent corruption which has become a national security threat; to open the way for effectively fighting against all types of terrorism; to enable fundamental, universal human rights for all our citizens regardless of their creed and ethnicity; to re-establish the constitutional order based on secular, democratic, social principles and the rule of law; to regain our nation and state’s lost international credibility; to establish a stronger relationship and co-operation in the international arena to ensure peace, stability and tranquility; has seized power.

State management will be undertaken and deputized by the Council of Peace at Home. The Council of Peace at Home has taken all the necessary measures to fulfill the obligations created by the UN, NATO and other international organizations. The political power has lost its legitimacy and is dismissed. All persons and organizations engaged in treason will be brought before the competent courts, which are authorized to give just verdicts on behalf of our nation.

The discourse employed by the coup faction, the Council of Peace at Home, seemed to indicate at a rhetorical level that the overthrow was also supported by some Kemalist officers. Nevertheless, as a result of what appeared to be a hastily planned and even more poorly executed political revolution, the coup plot failed. The rebellion against the military once again demonstrated the extent to which Islamist elites were willing to go to mobilize their followers in a counterrevolutionary push to oppose what was historically a foregone military coup. The failed coup also demonstrated the importance of the AK Party’s ability to mobilize their following during a particularly critical and precarious political moment when many observers had already uttered and written the obituary of the AK Party government. It has since been widely argued that the critical moment that ultimately decided the outcome of the coup was Erdoğan’s fateful decision to directly ask his followers to mobilize en masse and oppose the military’s attempted seizure of power.

As has been argued in this dissertation, the sociological literature on social movements best explains how Islamist social forces arose to establish broad based political movements that later found their most potent expression in institutionalized political parties. And while it has generally been assumed that such antiauthoritarian oppositional movements are dedicated to democratization, the Turkish case demonstrates that some movements can be as devoted to prolonging autocracy. While Gülen Movement bureaucratic and economic elites decided to cultivate the collective action required to influence public policy through a clandestine network of government employees, the National Outlook, the AKP and its political predecessors chose to channel their growing social and economic power into a broad-based political party. As a burgeoning party-movement, the Islamist coalition was held together by its prospective capacity to challenge the ideational foundations that girded together the military's interventionist logic within the state. Indeed, the core claim of this dissertation is that the military unwittingly cultivated the autonomy of those social forces that were most organized and committed to assuming an oppositional role within state institutions.

Despite the warnings of the military to obey the imposed curfew, hundreds-of-thousands of Turkish citizens took to the streets, most of which were ardent Erdoğan and AK Party supporters. Soon after Erdoğan and the party leadership hastily organized a call to television stations asking their followers to actively resist the coup by taking to the streets, 238 people were killed, 2,797 people were wounded, and 2,839 soldiers—most of whom were military conscripts—had been detained. It became increasingly clear the following morning on July 17, 2016 that the coup had utterly failed and had been plagued by a lack of organizational and tactical cohesion that likely doomed its prospects from the outset.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> 15 Temmuz Darbe Girişiminde Neler Oldu? [What happened during the July 15 Coup Attempt?] Retrieved August 10, 2016, from <http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/176798-15-temmuz-darbe-girisiminde-neler-oldu>



In addition to their ability to ably mount a quick tactical response to the military's attempted seizure of power by exhorting their followers to mobilize, AKP party leaders were able to quickly disseminate a discourse that connected economic grievances experienced by the Sunni majority with the failure of the Kemalist regime, which was for decades under the influence of the military. In formulating such a response, Erdoğan portrayed the movement under his leadership as the culmination of the Islamists' long-standing campaign to help democratize Turkey.

One particularly powerful expression of such a discourse appeared in the form of a poster on the streets in the initial hours of the coup attempt, which attempted to galvanize popular support in order to mobilize in defense of the AKP elected government. In the poster, Adnan Menderes, the leader of the Democrat Party, who was executed by the 1960 junta government, represented the first wave of democracy. Next was Turgut Özal, the eighth President of Turkey from 1989 to 1993, who died as a result of a heart attack but is believed by conspiracy theorists to have been poisoned by the "deep state," represented the second wave; Erdoğan stood at the front in the middle, as the latest of the democracy heroes. To his right was Necmettin Erbakan, the inimitable leader of the National Outlook Movement and Erdoğan's mentor until the 1997 military intervention. The collective visage of these leaders made the poster's message unmistakable: The military had once again attempted to overthrow a democratically elected government, and with such a tangible threat posed by the military, the AKP social support would be critical in determining the fate of the country.

The two men to the far right in the poster were prominent figures of the Turkish nationalist movement. Alparslan Türkeş, who was the iconic leader of the Nationalist Movement Party [Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP] and Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, who died in a helicopter accident in

2009, was the founder of Great Union Party [Büyük Birlik Partisi, BBP], which was the second largest nationalist-Islamist party in Turkey. Knowledgeable observers of Turkish history would likely be able to discern that the apparent motive behind juxtaposing the two in the poster was to convey how the unification of the nationalist and religious right under the banner of AKP leadership could help overcome the historical obstacles posed the military.



The notion that Islamist and nationalist movements were subjected to an heretofore unseen level of political scrutiny and pressure by the military has some merit. However, it tends to completely disregard the fact that Islamist political elites, particularly in the context of their staunch anti-communism during the Cold War, were also able to escape the type of opposition from state elites because of domestic and international political pressures that treated the Soviet Union as the primary threat to political stability.

The failed coup attempt in July 2016 therefore revealed the sweeping historical context in which collective political opposition to military interventionism occurred. The repertoires of political repression that had been so favorable to the military's tutelary guardianship of the state no longer held sway among a large segment of the voting public or the AK Party political elite that now controlled much of the bureaucratic machinery of the state. The failed coup also revealed how the decision of whether or not to institutionalize the organizational basis for elite opposition to authoritarian rule can be a fateful one. Whereas Gülen chose to mobilize their social base of support from within state institutions and ultimately decided against party creation, the AK Party and its political predecessors chose both. Furthermore, the repeated closure of Islamist parties by the military forced the movement to mobilize its social base of support outside the confines of electoral party politics and with a level of institutional autonomy rarely enjoyed by political actors in Turkish history. Finally, the military arrived at a political compact with Islamists following the 1980 coup in which they signaled elite toleration of their indefinite participation in national politics. Given their mutual opposition to the left, which had effectively demonstrated its capacity to mobilize its followers during the movement's heyday in the 1970s, the military was stuck between tolerating an Islamist movement without much of an institutionalized basis for challenging their rule, or a factional coalition of leftists that seemed to be increasingly capable of collectively threatening the military's stranglehold on state power. It would not be until the failed July 2016 coup and the 2017 constitutional referendum that the profound political consequences of this decision would finally be revealed.

## Chapter 4

### External Factors: Globalization

#### **Globalizing Civil-Military Relations**

If as Huntington infamously predicted, future ideological clashes will spring from civilizational conflict—effectively summed up by the expression ‘west versus the rest’—then his equally succinct description of university students as the enduring “universal opposition” also fails to find much empirical currency.<sup>294</sup> In Turkish society, the majority perennial political opposition has typically originated from the Islamist right, hardly a bastion of radical university leftism. While the 1960s and 1970s were fraught with severe ideological conflicts and were the most violent period contentious politics produced in the modern history of the Turkish republic, if nothing else, the existence of the Soviet Union served as a paradigmatic model that legitimized the Turkish left’s flirtation with communism during this period of political turmoil.

It is commonly recognized that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated an ideological crisis in many leftist movements across the world. In the absence of strong Soviet support to buttress and legitimize its ideological adoption by leftist political parties, the appeal of communism was unsurprisingly discredited by the loss of its most tangible political embodiment. In Turkey, ideological debates were nevertheless far from being settled since the Islamist opposition had yet to forcefully mobilize their movement into a following that had the necessary political and bureaucratic power within the state to challenge the military. Moreover, processes of globalization that have by now become a mainstay of society had begun to

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<sup>294</sup>Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Twentieth Century*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

gradually change the dynamics of contentious politics in Turkey in ways that would both help and hinder the country's democratization prospects.

At its root, globalization refers to the rapid spread of capital, labor and goods across the world, with the transmission of ideas and knowledge production being equally important aspects of the same basic phenomenon.<sup>295</sup> However, when scholars have peered more closely into the contingent and discrete processes at both national and supranational levels that shape globalization as a political construction, they have increasingly pointed to several critical factors that speak to the economy of globalization. For instance, Steger has keenly observed that definitions of globalization often entail a set of competing interpretations as to what globalization precisely constitutes. Different types of globalization, or what he calls "globalisms," represent a "hegemonic system of ideas that make normative claims about a set of social processes called globalization."<sup>296</sup>

The spread of some of these political norms has been particularly relevant to some of the secularist discourses that have been so endemic to Turkish politics since its founding. As Nevzat Soguk has so adroitly observed, the headscarf ban enforced by the secularist military elites in Turkey has, paradoxically enough, been increasingly championed by conservative elements within European parliaments, such as in Belgium and France, where legal prohibitions on Islamic dress such as the burqa have been debated and by state and society and ultimately ratified into law.<sup>297</sup> Perhaps even more paradoxically, the globalization of other anti-Islam laws, such as bans on the construction of Islamic architecture vis-à-vis popular European referendums, speak to how the production of local and national globalisms are shaped by historical contingency:

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<sup>295</sup> Held, David. 2003. *The Global Transformations Reader* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

<sup>296</sup> Steger, Manfred. 2009. *Globalisms* (1st ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, p. 7.

<sup>297</sup> Soguk, Nevzat. 2011. *Globalization and Islamism: Beyond Fundamentalism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Whereas in Turkey *the state* has long sought to institutionalize prohibitions on the wearing of headscarves in public spaces, in European cities *society* has increasingly been the political fulcrum to achieve such social objectives. If we therefore accept globalism as a set of ideas and ideological claims, then as political ideas and norms expand beyond national borders, novel types of globalisms are generated by the new historical and political contexts they inhabit. Steger underlines this very point by noting that among various subtypes, market globalism as a political ideology became the most dominant ideational force in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and it tended to typify the central tenets of neoliberalism, which Steger outlines:

primacy of economic growth, the importance of free trade to stimulate growth, the unrestricted free market, individual choice, the reduction of government regulation, and the advocacy of an evolutionary model of social development anchored in the Western experience and applicable to the entire world.<sup>298</sup>

In a similar vein, civilian authority over the state has figured as perhaps the consummate example of market globalism's spread and adoption since the 1974 Portuguese Carnation Revolution, which resulted from a military coup organized by a faction of progressively oriented officers in the Portuguese military.<sup>299</sup> The Carnation Revolution set off a prolonged period of democratization in the global South that more or less continues until the present. The Carnation Revolution was also the starting point for the greatest period of global democratization in world history, popularly termed the "third-wave" of democracy. The revolution in Portugal foreshadowed the types of authoritarian regimes that presented the greatest challenge to democracy's global march: tutelary military regimes. Spreading to Latin America from Southern Europe, the third-wave saw a whole host of military regimes collapse to elite settlements made between civil authorities and the military. Portugal therefore was not only the spatial and

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<sup>298</sup> Steger (2009), 10.

<sup>299</sup> Bruneau, Thomas. 2015. *Global politics of defense reform* (1st ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 53.

temporal epicenter for the spread of democracy's largest ever wave, but it served to highlight the types of authoritarian regimes that seemed to be most vulnerable to authoritarian collapse: dominant military dictatorships. Scholars such as O'Donnell and Schmitter later theorized this pattern of military vulnerability in their seminal study of authoritarian collapse during the third-wave<sup>300</sup>, and later scholarship by comparativists such as Barbara Geddes further fortified this robust finding.<sup>301</sup> The primary reason scholars see military-led regimes as being so susceptible to collapse is due to their inherent resistance to maintaining the cohesion of the ruling elite and thus preventing elite defection. This is primarily because in countries dominated by the military, the kinds of state institutions that are typically considered to prevent elite-defection in authoritarian regimes—such as political parties—are often poorly positioned and equipped to maintain the state's civilian control over the armed forces. In cases where already strong political parties are backed by a strong base of social support and a large middle-class membership—not to mention a demonstrated history of civilian capacity to check the military—party controls can effectively contribute to constraining the military's ability to act with impunity.

During the Carnation Revolution, the coup plotters were officers who had fought in former Portuguese colonies in Africa, referring to themselves as the Armed Forces Movement (MFA). The goal of the coup was to seize power from the Estado Novo dictatorship, which had ruled Portugal since the 1930s, in order to lead the country towards a transition to democracy. The initial political program that the putschists designed rested on three fundamental ideals: “decolonization, democratization, and development.”<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> O'Donnell, Guillermo and Philippe Schmitter C. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>301</sup> Geddes, Barbara. 1999. “What do we know about democratization after twenty years?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 115-144.

<sup>302</sup> Rezola, Maria I. 2008. “The Military, 25 April and the Portuguese Transition to Democracy.” *Portuguese Journal of Social Sciences*, 7 (1): 6.

The Carnation Revolution caught the United States and its NATO allies by surprise. Henry Kissinger, the infamous U.S. Secretary of State who had a penchant for “involving” the U.S. in the domestic politics of many democratizing countries, later acknowledged that “Washington knew next to nothing about any of the personalities involved” in the MFA’s organized coup.<sup>303</sup> Fifteen months after the revolution, the political trajectory of the regime was unclear, and the risk of a communist takeover was more plausible than ever before. The participation of the Portuguese Communist Party in the government had deeply troubled Portugal’s political allies. Kissinger was in particular concerned about the plausibility of a Communist takeover being replicated elsewhere in Europe, especially in Italy. “If the Communists gained a hold over the government in either country,” Kissinger maintained, “it would create a sense of inevitability, facilitating the inclusion of Communists in other NATO countries.”<sup>304</sup>

Portugal’s transition to democracy, its commitment to strengthening market globalism, and its status as one of the founding members of NATO, pushed the U.S. to prioritize it as a major foreign policy issue. It was at this point that its NATO allies, specifically Germany and the U.S., commenced a response to actively encourage Portugal’s transition to a functioning liberal democracy by providing economic aid and technical assistance through international organizations. German assistance was facilitated via its party foundations, known as *Stiftungen*.<sup>305</sup> By the mid-1970s, these foundations began assisting democracies that were in transition on the Iberian Peninsula. Democracy promotion via civilian control over the state and armed forces was increasingly becoming a foundational element in international programs dedicated to democratic transition.

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<sup>303</sup> Pero, Mario D. 2011. ““Which Chile, Allende?” Henry Kissinger and the Portuguese Revolution.” *Cold War History* 11(4): 627.

<sup>304</sup> Pero (2011), 628.

<sup>305</sup> Bruneau (2015), 53.



Following the successful transition of Portugal, democracy promotion was becoming a “big business.”<sup>306</sup> In 1983, the United States Congress founded the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Today, NED supports a wide variety of organizations and programs such as the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, the Journal of Democracy, the International Forum for Democratic Studies, the World Movement for Democracy, and the Center for International Media Assistance. Along with NED, USAID also employs democracy promotion programs through its Office of Democracy and Governance. While USAID works with the civilian side – the NGOs, government institutions, and the media – in building and improving states’ institutional capacities, the Department of Defense (DOD) has focused its efforts on the military side of civil-military relations, most notably through the Extended International Military Education and Training Program (E-IMET). USAID’s efforts mostly address the training of civilians on specific issues, such as “formulating a defense policy, overseeing the development and implementation of military budgets, lobbying for changes in laws, or informing the public.”<sup>307</sup> The DOD’s E-IMET program, on the other hand, trains officers in areas that deal with cultivating institutional synthesis among civilian leaders engaged in defense sector management, which in turn enhances civilian control of the military.

The attitudinal norms of these democracy promotion programs require aid recipients ensure that military institutions embrace and adopt certain institutional prerogatives. Most notably, this approach is defined by three key features: the *civil-supremacy principle in decision-making*, *civilian oversight of defense spending*, and *a minimal to no role for the military in the national*

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<sup>306</sup> Bruneau (2015), 55.

<sup>307</sup> Welch, Claude and Johanna Mendelson F. 1998. *Civil-military relations: USAID's role*. Washington, D.C: Center for Democracy and Governance, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research, U.S. Agency for International Development, p. 4.

*economy*.<sup>308</sup> Since the end of Cold War, these norms that collectively constitute civilian supremacy, among a multitude of others, continue to play an indispensable role in the structural reorganization of many of the world's still democratizing countries and the military's relationship with civilian elites. Similarly, standards of civil-military relations prescribed by the EU and NATO unequivocally established a set of objective criteria for aspiring states wishing to become members. Although reaching this critical threshold is in and of itself insufficient for obtaining NATO membership, these norms were employed as guiding principles for the democratic and civilian reform of political elites, the institutions they occupy, and their accompanying attitudinal norms they employ to establish the principle of civilian supremacy.<sup>309</sup>

One other way that these guiding principles are circulated globally is through international think tanks. For instance, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), makes background papers and detailed case studies available on its website. In one of these papers, basic concepts relating to security sector reform (SSR) and democratic control of the armed forces are explained in general terms. The key features of an “effective system of democratic control” are outlined and characterized by the following elements:

**Civilian control:** civilian authorities have control over the military's missions, composition, budget and procurement policies. Military policy is defined or approved by the civilian leadership, but the military enjoys substantial operational autonomy in determining which operations are required to achieve the policy objectives defined by the civilian authority.

**Democratic governance:** democratic parliamentary and judicial institutions, a strong civil-society and an independent media oversee the performance of the military. This ensures its accountability to both the population and the government, and promotes transparency in its decisions and actions.

**Non-interference in domestic politics:** Neither the military as an institution nor individual military leaders attempt to influence domestic politics.

**Ideological neutrality:** The military does not endorse any particular ideology or ethos beyond that of allegiance to the country.

**Minimal role in the national economy:** The military may be the largest national employer and have links to defense-related economic sectors. This does not, however, dilute the military's loyalty to the democratic civilian leadership, undermine its

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<sup>308</sup> Claude and Forman (1998), 4-5.

<sup>309</sup> NATO members must unanimously vote ‘yes’ for a candidate to become a member state.

primary mission or lead to disproportionate competition or interference with the civilian industrial sector.

**Effective chain of command:** There is an effective chain of command within the military that ensures accountability to society and its oversight institutions, promotes respect for all relevant laws and regulations, and seeks to ensure professionalism in the military.

**Respect for the rights of military personnel:** Members of the armed forces are free to exercise their rights.<sup>310</sup>

With the exception of a “minimal role in the national economy,” the abovementioned norms can be traced back to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its 1994 code of conduct. In spite of this, utilizing metrics on the military’s role in the national economy as a major qualitative standard by which civil-military relations is assessed continues to be a hotly contested topic. That the military should participate in the economy through the establishment of investment funds, the purchasing of banks, and founding of companies that operate in industrial and defense-related industries is entirely incompatible with a “principle of the democratic alignment of modern political space and state structure.”<sup>311</sup> Just as the military’s intervention in politics damages its institutional and political neutrality, an active involvement in the economy as a stakeholder inexorably damages the military’s claim of economic neutrality.<sup>312</sup> Furthermore, when the military actively inhabits political space that affords it major sociopolitical and socioeconomic power, the military’s combat structure, its operational capacity, and internal structure are gradually undermined.

From a perspective of nationalist interest, however, the critical national security role played by the military necessarily bestows it with a degree of independence. This autonomy often includes industrial activity related to automobile and steel production to cement factories and

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<sup>310</sup> Glisic, Jamina, Alexandre Lambert, Oksana Myshlovska, Jamie Stocker, Katie Meline, and Gabriel Real de Azua. (2008, May 5). *DCAF Backgrounder: Democratic Control of Armed Forces*. Retrieved from [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/55845/17\\_bg\\_dem\\_control\\_armed\\_forces.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/55845/17_bg_dem_control_armed_forces.pdf)

<sup>311</sup> Akça, İsmet. 2010. *Military-Economic Structure in Turkey: Present Situation, Problems, and Solutions*. Istanbul: TESEV Publications.

<sup>312</sup> Akça (2010), 14-15.

other traditional sectors vital to defense industry, which are often important for the growth of national economy. In this respect, the United States has been long criticized for its bloated defense industry by its own political elite, the most famous of which was former president Eisenhower, who famously warned of the growth of a “military-industrial complex,” as well as president Obama, who in a similar vein observed that the U.S. “spend[s] more on our military than the next eight nations combined.”<sup>313</sup> U.S. expenditure on the military and the astronomical growth of related defense sector industries has nevertheless not impacted the long history of civilian command and control, although scholars, policymakers, and pundits have noted the deleterious influence it presents and portends for U.S. democracy. Seen from this standpoint, when states that are bereft of preexisting civilian-owned corporations in manufacturing and defense sectors, the military is generally considered to be the galvanizing impetus behind initiatives to develop or help develop civilian controls.

However, in an era where neoliberalism dominates as both an economic *and* political ideology, naturally the military’s stakeholder role in the economy becomes highly problematic. This is so for two primary reasons. First, reduction in the size of the government is a major tenet of neoliberalism, and the military as a state institution, is not excepted from this principle. Second, unrestricted free market principles require that human economic activity should remain firmly within the bounds of private capital, and the military’s ability to reserve an area of institutional interest that addresses its own production capacity and profit from its direct economic transactions should be foreclosed in order for civilian supremacy to occur.

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<sup>313</sup> Obama, Barack. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (2016). Remarks by the president in state of union address Washington, D.C.: Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/12/remarks-president-barack-obama-%E2%80%93-prepared-delivery-state-union-address>

## The Turkish Military's Comportment with Western Standards

Europe's contribution to civil-military norms was for the first time embodied in a 1994 signed document termed the Code of Conduct on Political-Military Aspects of Security, by member states of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE later OSCE). The document was referred to as the “most important *normative document* [emphasis added] adopted by the OSCE participating states since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.”<sup>314</sup>

The political significance of the Code was that for the first time OSCE member states willingly accepted an adjustment to the internal functioning of the armed forces on agreed international and normative guidelines. The code of conduct was a conciliatory attempt to resolve politico-military aspects of security by suggesting that the two can be reconciled at the level of democratic control. From that perspective, sections VII-VIII of the Code focus on issues of democratic control and democratic use of the military at both domestic and international levels. Ghebali and Lambert explain that provisions that aim to create standards with regard to these two issues stem from a more fundamental question: “Who must control what, how and why?”<sup>315</sup> While articles 21 and 22 define the “who” element as “constitutionally established authorities vested with democratic legitimacy,” which “exercise restraint in its military expenditures and provide for transparency and public access to information related to the armed forces,” article 20 addresses the “why” element by stating that democratic control of the defense sector would “further the integration of armed forces with civil-society as an important expression of democracy.”<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Ghebali, Victor-Yves. 2005. *The OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security: Anatomy and Implementation*. Leiden.

<sup>315</sup> Ghebali (2005), 9.

<sup>316</sup> Ghebali (2005), 10.

The “how” element is perhaps the most difficult to answer given structural divergence in political systems and the national practices of participating member states. However, as Ghebali demonstrate, the OSCE addresses the aspects of what is generally considered to be the four pillars of the democratic control and use of the military by suggesting that:

the primacy of democratic constitutional civilian power over military power, subjection of the armed forces to the norms and prescription of international humanitarian law, respect of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the armed forces personnel, and regulation of the use of armed forces for internal security purposes.<sup>317</sup>

Articles 21-26 are referred to as the first pillars and analyze the primacy of democratic constitutional civilian power over the military’s power. Articles 24-26 additionally seek to guard against the possible abuse of power by the military, internal security forces, and paramilitary organizations. Article 23 states that the military ought to be “politically neutral”: “The participating State, while providing for the individual service member’s exercise of his or her civil rights, will ensure that its armed forces as such are politically neutral.”<sup>318</sup>

The question of whether or not militaries can be politically neutral, particularly given their ideally designated role as being structurally subordinate to civilian leaders who achieve political power democratically, is widely considered to have been answered by Huntington’s theory of objective civilian control. Huntington suggests a military can be described as being professional and under civilian control only when it is primarily concerned with the application and planning of violence, whereas it chooses to devolve the responsibility and management of making the decision to deploy violence to civilian leadership. However, this also means the military has an attitudinal obligation to obey civilian leadership, regardless of civilian elites’ political ideology or the methods they choose to temper and tame international conflict.

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<sup>317</sup> Ghebali (2005), 10.

<sup>318</sup> Ghebali (2005), 11.

Nevertheless, there are intervening factors that can complicate the normative commitment to civilian control. For instance, what occurs when the military is under civilian but undemocratic control, and the state's actions lead to widespread human rights abuses and crimes? This question leads us to the second pillar, which deals with the subjection of the armed forces to the norms and prescriptions of international humanitarian law, of which articles 29, 30, 31, 34, and 35 rest.<sup>319</sup>

As discussed in detail, the OSCE code of conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security conveyed an important aspect of civilian control, for it provided for the first time a basic and politically binding normative framework that aimed to promote a specific understanding of civil-military conduct in the military establishments of OSCE participating states. Apart from the fact that both theory and practice in the application of international 'realism' or 'realpolitik' often exempt the most powerful institutional actors from being subjected to the standards, such as the military, their existence and dissemination via international organizations help to temper the military's attitudinal inclination to interfere in politics. There is perhaps no better contemporary example in the world of the far-reaching effects international organizations can have in

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<sup>319</sup> The participating States will make widely available in their respective countries the international humanitarian law of war. They will reflect, in accordance with national practice, their commitments in this field in their military training programmes and regulations. (Article 29)

Each participating State will ensure that its armed forces are, in peace and in war, commanded, manned, trained and equipped in ways that are consistent with the provisions of international law and its respective obligations and commitments related to the use of armed forces in armed conflict, including as applicable the Hague Conventions of 1907 and 1954, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977 Protocols Additional thereto, as well as the 1980 Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons. (Article 34)

Each participating State will ensure that its defense policy and doctrine are consistent with international law related to the use of armed forces, including in armed conflict, and the relevant commitments of this Code. (Article 35)

Each participating State will instruct its armed forces personnel in international humanitarian law, rules, conventions and commitments governing armed conflict and will ensure that such personnel are aware that they are individually accountable under national and international law for their actions. (Article 30)

The participating States will ensure that armed forces personnel vested with command authority exercise it in accordance with relevant national as well as international law and are made aware that they can be held individually accountable under those laws for the unlawful exercise of such authority and that orders contrary to national and international law must not be given. The responsibility of superiors does not exempt subordinates from any of their individual responsibilities. (Article 31)

transmitting the principle of civilian supremacy than Turkey. While Turkish secularists have long overestimated the sincerity of Islamist movements in pushing these principles, the Turkish military also failed to convince national and supra-national organizations such as the European Union that the country's existing institutional architecture that favored the military's guardian role, although did not fit into the neoliberal model, was politically tenable.

Globalization, as a political process that transmits a particular ideational commitment to politics and economics, coupled with the internal sociopolitical dynamics of Turkey, has gradually withered away at the military's attitudinal and structural stranglehold on power.

### **Attitudes and Ideologies: Ideational and Ideological Legacies in Context**

In spite of its interventionist inclinations to prevent Islamist movements and parties from fundamentally changing the secularist foundations of the state, the Turkish military has demonstrated an otherwise strong commitment to fully democratizing the country. To be sure, the military has historically been the primary political impetus behind Turkey's stalled democratic transition because of its sometimes knee-jerk reaction to Islamic party rhetoric and Kurdish demands for autonomy. Still, the Turkish Republic represents what many historians have identified as the most systematically transformational state-building project of the twentieth century, both from a sociopolitical perspective as well from the standpoint of political culture. The historical momentum first established by Atatürk and the institutional patterns of bureaucratic comportment he bequeathed has over the course of Turkey's near-century long path towards democratization inexorably shaped elite attitudes regarding the institutionalization of



secularism as the *sin qua non* of not just competitive party politics, but of mass participatory politics as well.

Scholarship on the recent collapse of the secularist state in Turkey is presently a rare commodity. This is due to two primary reasons. First, is the recency of the AKP's political turn towards Islamist authoritarianism, which observers of Turkey suggest began to take tangible shape sometime between 2011 and 2013. It became obvious as the Gezi Park protests unfolded. Second, and perhaps more importantly, is the AK Party's stunning yet somewhat predictable victory in the constitutional referendum held on April 16, 2017. The referendum realized Erdoğan's long-standing ambition to turn Turkey from a parliamentary system with a strong set of institutional checks and balances to a presidential republic that eviscerated the power of the parliament and fully brought the guardian role of the military under civilian and party controls. This has for many sounded the death-knell of secularism and democracy in Turkey, and it is difficult to overestimate the historical and political consequences of such a momentous decision that was no less rendered by the Turkish public.<sup>320</sup>

Yet, why did elite attitudes and commitments to secularism fail to protect the Turkish state against authoritarian encroachments by Islamist elites just as the state was beginning to fully democratize, and how did almost one hundred years of institutional secularist momentum come to a crashing halt in the span of just decade?

This dissertation has argued that one of the central factors that best explains AK Party capacity to fundamentally weaken the structures around which state power is based was due to the military's conflicting political ambitions and ideological impulses: The military preserved an *ideational and political impulse* that sought a mass participatory politics that ideally included all

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<sup>320</sup> Nevertheless, the referendum was plagued by electoral improprieties that were directly facilitated and condoned by the AKP, which among many things, included prohibitions on the ability of the "no" campaign and other oppositional parties to freely organize, as well as the totalitarian-like constraints the Turkish media operated under.

political actors, even Islamist movements and parties, but it also held tight to its abiding *ideological and institutional impulse* that sought to keep the state secular at all political costs. Such dissonance was directly behind the state's tactical strategy of expelling Islamists from power and temporarily proscribing elite actors from participating in mass politics, only to allow them to reenter national politics under different party labels once they had demonstrated sufficient fidelity and acceptance of the system. This by definition forestalled Islamist institutionalization into the state, forcing them to the relative autonomy of a mass social movement that mobilized through a network of economic, cultural, and political elites. The weakening of the state's guardian institutions met far less resistance once the AKP had established the necessary electoral momentum to win through democratic means, thereby handicapping the military's already compliant posture towards its ever-changing role within the state.

Differences between the ideational and ideological dimensions of state power have rarely been discussed with respect to Turkey. Partially because the two terms are often conflated to mean the same thing, but also because they collectively connote the underlying importance of political beliefs and mentalities, ideational and ideological studies tend to reflect two sides of the same coin. Yet there are profound differences between a regime's ideological and ideational impulses.

Juan Linz, for example, argued that the primary difference between ideological and ideational worldviews is variation in their internal philosophical coherence and consistency, as well as how they are informed by intellectual and moral principles. Whereas ideas are more or less dispositions, beliefs, and mentalities—*essentially attitudes*—that mostly lack an underlying philosophical coherence and are typically not guided by a moral ethic, ideologies are just the

opposite, and are defined by coherent intellectual principles, that are in turn shaped by ethical and moral values.<sup>321</sup> To state the matter succinctly, the Turkish military was caught between its conflicting *ideational and political commitment* to mass participatory politics, and its *ideological commitment* to a kind of politics, or Kemalist secularism. In the end, the military, seeing that the AKP had not tangibly attempted to overturn the strictures of secularism, and in the case of the AKP, had actually began to embrace it following the 1997 soft coup, *chose its political commitment to democratization over its ideological commitment towards a specific type of it*. This was not new. The Turkish military had long demonstrated it was more politically pliant with respect to its evolving role within the system than its repeated interventions would seem to indicate. Nevertheless, after the 1980 coup in which the military sought to permanently sideline the leftist mobilization of the 1970s—and in the context of Cold War international politics—it struck a bargain with Islamist elites. The attitudinal inclination of the military was therefore guided by its democratic commitments because it perceived Islam to not only threaten secularism, but to simultaneously threaten democracy as well. In short, what good was the state’s ideological commitment to secularism in the absence of its attitudinal devotion to democracy?

The military’s tacit acceptance of Islamist electoral participation after both the 1980 and 1997 coups demonstrate how its linkages to the west and its internal ambition to democratize Turkey gradually weakened its guardian authority.<sup>322</sup> This was due to three primary factors. First was the Cold War political climate that tilted the military’s towards perceiving the leftist internal opposition as the greatest ideological threat. The Turkish military’s membership in western security organizations such as NATO, moreover, further buttressed the capacity of the domestic

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<sup>321</sup> Linz, Juan J. 2000. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>322</sup> Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2007. “Elections Without Democracy: The rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51-65.

political opposition to leverage the state's democratic linkages to the west. Second, the contentious Turkish politics of the 1970s had further demonstrated the budding mobilizational capacity of leftist movements, and the military treated their growing capacity to mobilize with a mixture of political alarm in conjunction with a draconian coercive crackdown that saw them annihilate the so-called "radical" leftist opposition. Third, given Islamist ideological opposition to the left, the military sought to form a tactical alliance with them after the 1980 coup. From the standpoint of electoral politics and Turkish society, Islamists were a far more organized, politically powerful, and economically formidable constituency than the left, and they would be difficult if not impossible to eliminate as an oppositional force.

### **Institutional Rearrangements Under The 1993 Copenhagen Criteria**

The prospect of Turkey becoming a member state of the EU—which became a formal possibility in 1999 following the EU's Helsinki decision to extend candidacy status—continued a historical process that addressed the necessary institutional changes and outcomes in order for it to eventually realize its membership potential, which has extensively shaped civil-military and state-society relations in Turkey. A series of constitutional amendments and legislative reforms that were passed by the Turkish parliament between 2001 and 2010 gradually abrogated the military's institutional prerogatives, which were established following the 1961 and 1980 military coups. Yet the rising political fortunes of the AKP and their rise to power as an antiauthoritarian social movement increasingly challenge their presumed commitment to democracy and the democratizing assumptions inherent in social movement research and analysis.

The commitment of Turkey's ruling elites to EU integration has provided a political opportunity for reform that has been so systematically sweeping in its impact that it is difficult to measure, given the confluence of other contingencies and the relatively unique circumstances they are collectively situated within. In 2003, the parliament passed the Democracy Package bill, which aimed to restructure the role of the military, specifically the role of National Security Council (NSC), in national policymaking. The National Security Council, which was established in 1962 following the 1960 military coup,<sup>323</sup> as an advisory council to the cabinet of the Prime Minister. The council's structure and duties were reframed after the 1980 military coup, in accordance with the 1982 Constitution. The Council's structure remained unchanged until the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Harmonization package passed in the parliament in 2003.

The package,

- increased the civilian members of the NSC to a majority voting position;
- reduced the scope of the Secretary-General's role by repealing the old provision that ministries, public institutions, organizations and private legal persons shall submit regularly, or when requested, non-classified or classified information and documents needed by the General Secretariat of the council;
- revised the procedure for the appointment of the Secretary-General and made it subject to the approval of the President on the proposal of the prime minister. This allowed for a non-military person to serve as Secretary-General. The views of the chief of general staff are to be taken into account if a member of the TAF is to be appointed to the post;
- cut down the number of departments under the authority of the Secretary-General from 11 to 7 along with the transfer of surplus personnel to other state departments;
- reduced the number of times the NSC meets from monthly to bimonthly;
- allowed if not full, at least greater parliamentary scrutiny of the military budget;
- decreased the NSC's budget by 60 percent;
- removed the confidentiality rule surrounding the activities of the NSC by stipulating; that a new by-law be passed on the rules and regulations of the NSC;
- paved the way for the appointment of the first civilian Secretary-General to the Council.<sup>324</sup> |

The military's reaction to the proposed structural changes contained in the NSC was to not contest the amendments. However, a number of military generals expressed their discontent

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<sup>323</sup> The bill was passed after 1960 and in accordance with the 1961 Constitution.

<sup>324</sup> Cizre, Ümit. 2007. *Prime Movers, Specific Features and Challenges of Security Sector Reform in a "Guardian State": The case of Turkey*. Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), p. 12.

publicly, stating that the National Security Council was left functionless and had effectively been politically emasculated by the provisions.<sup>325</sup>

The 8<sup>th</sup> EU Harmonization package that was passed by the AK Party majority-led parliament in 2004 expanded the authority of the Court of Auditors to oversee defense expenditure. The package also removed the remaining seats allocated to military officers to sit on the boards of state institutions such as the Radio and Television Supreme Council, the Council of Higher Education, and the Supreme Communication Board.<sup>326</sup> The same package also abolished the State Security Courts, which were authorized to render verdicts on crimes committed by civilians.

Perhaps the most critical of these legislative reforms came with the 2010 constitutional amendment, which quite ironically went into effect following the referendum held on the anniversary of the 1980 military coup on September 12, 2010. The amendment essentially made the decisions of the High Military Council (HMC) subject to judicial review. The revision also effectively abolished the mechanism that the military institutionalized in 1971 that allowed it to discharge officers with “undesired” ideological affiliations from the armed forces without any legal due process. Second, the amendment also limited the authority of military courts to hear cases that involved crimes committed by military officers against military officers. Civilian courts were given jurisdiction over all crimes committed by active duty officers, including crimes committed against the security of the state and the constitution.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Hürriyetim. (2003, August 25). *Org. Kılıncı: MGK işlevsiz hale geldi*. Retrieved from <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/08/25/334714.asp>

<sup>326</sup> Ünlü, Tuba B. 2009. “The Military and the Europeanization Reforms in Turkey.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 45 (5): 805.

<sup>327</sup> Gürsoy, Yaprak. 2011. “The Impact of EU-driven Reforms on the Political Autonomy of the Turkish Military.” *South European Society and Politics* 16 (2): 298.

## Conclusion

For Gülen and the AK Party-movement, the EU-driven reforms, their embracement of neoliberal market ideology, and their collective exploitation of democratization rhetoric were instrumental in laying the political groundwork in the event a social force could arise to leverage these dynamics against the military. Gülen's network of actors within the state bureaucracy combined with Erdoğan's rising popularity laid the additional political groundwork for a united Islamist front to pose a serious oppositional challenge to the military and its influence within the state institutions. For instance, although constitutional amendments that extended civilian court jurisdiction over military officers had already passed in 2010, in practice active duty officers were already being tried by civilian courts beginning as early as 2008 with the Ergenekon trials.<sup>328</sup> The Sledgehammer case, which began in February 2010 and involved high ranking retired and active duty officers—was brought forward with the intention to ensure that a certain cadre/officers of the military, especially the ones with ideological sensitivities against the rise of Islamism, military would be removed in groups.

Beginning in 2007, when the military warned the AKP government with the electronic memorandum, to 2013, when a multitude of cases were opened against hundreds of military officers, journalists, and member of various civil society organizations over sedition charges related to plots to overthrow the government, the judiciary was increasingly staffed and vested with Gülen loyalists. The difference was, in fact much like the military, the AKP now enjoyed the type of institutional power within the state bureaucracy to prosecute or force its political opponents out of office. Both the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases collapsed with the revelation that

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<sup>328</sup> This was during periods of peace that were absent of any military conflict.

most of the evidence against the defendants had been fabricated or produced with illegal wiretappings.<sup>329</sup>

The Turkish public witnessed for the first time the lengths to which an elected government had gone to crush an alleged attempt by the military to overthrow the government. The principle of civilian supremacy had also gained growing currency within society at large, partially due to the relentless democratizing rhetoric used by movement predecessors to the AKP but especially by the AKP itself. Turkey's EU candidacy status, the attendant norms and institutional changes required by international organizations further buttressed AKP's ability to bridle the military, providing both the legal framework and the discourse necessary for purging anti-AKP and Islamist sentiment from the military.

Yet what is perhaps most theoretically puzzling about the long history of contentious oppositional politics in Turkey is that the AKP seemingly does not share the military's own commitment to democratization. From the standpoint of political theory, when political parties and movements become institutionalized, they are widely considered to adopt the normative logic of democratic politics.<sup>330</sup> Once previously radicalized movements are coopted by the internal bureaucratic logic of the state, they gradually become less radical as they adapt to rules that necessitate their electoral survival as competitive parties as well as their political and institutional survival as ideological actors within the system. Yet this typical pattern of incorporation into the state did not happen with the AKP because the military neither tolerated their permanent institutionalization, nor could it successfully carry out their political annihilation, as they had with the left in the 1970s and early 1980s. Instead, they existed in an

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<sup>329</sup> Waldman and Caliskan (2017).

<sup>330</sup> Nasr, Vali. 2005. "The Rise of 'Muslim Democracy'". *Journal of Democracy* 16(2): 13-27.



amorphous legal-political space between institutionalized party politics and autonomous mass movements, or what I have called a hybrid party-movement.

The common theoretical expectation, therefore, that the AKP's Islamist rhetoric would be tamed and any authoritarian inclinations it preserved would be constrained by democratic participation is not born out by contentious politics in Turkey. Moreover, party-movements such as the AKP further challenge the democratizing assumptions of social movement studies. As this dissertation has consistently argued, mass movements that are at the forefront of challenging authoritarian rule are not always the most committed to democratization. As the recent April 2017 referendum has ironically shown, the military ostensibly retained a greater commitment towards democracy than the AKP, particularly given the political constraints imposed by international and domestic politics on the military. Even during the darkest nadir of Turkish democracy, the military was unwilling to initiate a permanent mass purge of Islamists from their positions at state institutions. Though, in the eighteen months since the initiation of state emergency rule in July 2016, thirty-one statutory decrees were issued by the AK Party leadership through which over 152,000 state employees, "many totally arbitrarily" were dismissed from their jobs and their benefits were denied to them.<sup>331</sup> While Western linkages with the EU and NATO worked against the military's guardian role, forcing the institution to increase political space for the opposition, the AK Party movement increasingly was able to move away from the same set of norms before or during the state emergency rule.

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<sup>331</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report on the Impact of the State of Emergency on Human Rights in Turkey, Including an Update on the South-East* (Geneva: United Nations, 20 March 2018), available from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22853&LangID=E>.

Nevertheless, it was not the specter of mass democratic politics that ultimately facilitated the downfall of the military's guardian role, but other domestic and international forces that spelled its doom.

The Turkish republic was irrevocably changed from a parliamentary to a presidential system with a narrow 51 percent majority on April 16, 2017 following a constitutional referendum, the most important plebiscite or election in modern Turkish history. The sweeping new powers Erdoğan won have all but guaranteed his position as the president of Turkey until 2023, which would mean Erdoğan would have occupied the position of head of the government (president or prime minister) for approximately twenty-seven years, generally a term in office only enjoyed by autocrats, monarchs, and sultans.

During the course of the plebiscite, proponents of the “no” campaign did not enjoy equal access to state resources and were denied equal air time on public and private television. A political decree passed on February 9, 2017 by the Council of Ministers removed a provision in the existing law that made it a legal obligation for news stations to give equal airtime to all political parties that had active seats in the parliament.<sup>332</sup> Selahattin Demirtas, the young leader of Turkey's Kurdish socialist party—the HDP (People's Democratic Party)—was imprisoned along with numerous other HDP members who met similar fates or have been illegally detained without due process for months under the state of emergency law that was activated after the July 2016 failed coup attempt.

Laws that protect fundamental freedoms and civil rights were curtailed under the emergency rule, and scores of journalists have also been imprisoned. Just a few hours before the ballots were included in the count, the High Electoral Board announced that ballots that had not been certified

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<sup>332</sup>See official gazette clause # 10

<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/main.aspx?home=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2017/02/20170209.htm&main=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2017/02/20170209.htm>

by local authorities were nevertheless to be included in the final vote tally. The decision was unlawful and made it virtually impossible to determine the precise number of ballots cast in the election. The CHP filed an appeal on April 21, 2017 against the High Electoral Board's decision to accept uncertified ballots in the count, asserting that the decision removed the state institutional safeguard against electoral fraud. However, President Erdogan and the ruling AKP government declared that complaints were useless, stating, "the people have decided and the national will has made its voice heard."<sup>333</sup>

As this dissertation has suggested, mass movements at the forefront of challenging authoritarian rule possess the capacity to extract concessions and impose constraints on the most durable authoritarian regimes. At the same time, unlike most cases where antiauthoritarian movements are presumed to be ardent champions of democracy, antiregime mobilization in Turkey has increasingly veered towards an authoritarian outcome, contradicting the democratizing assumptions of social movement research. As the April 16, 2017 referendum revealed, antiauthoritarian social movements can help produce the type of authoritarian outcomes that are generally reserved for dominant institutional actors like the military.

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<sup>333</sup> Hürriyetim. (2017, April 20). *Erdogan: Bu is bitti!* [Erdogan: It is over]. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/erdogan-bu-is-bitti-40433196>

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